ASPECTS OF
RELIGION IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Edited by
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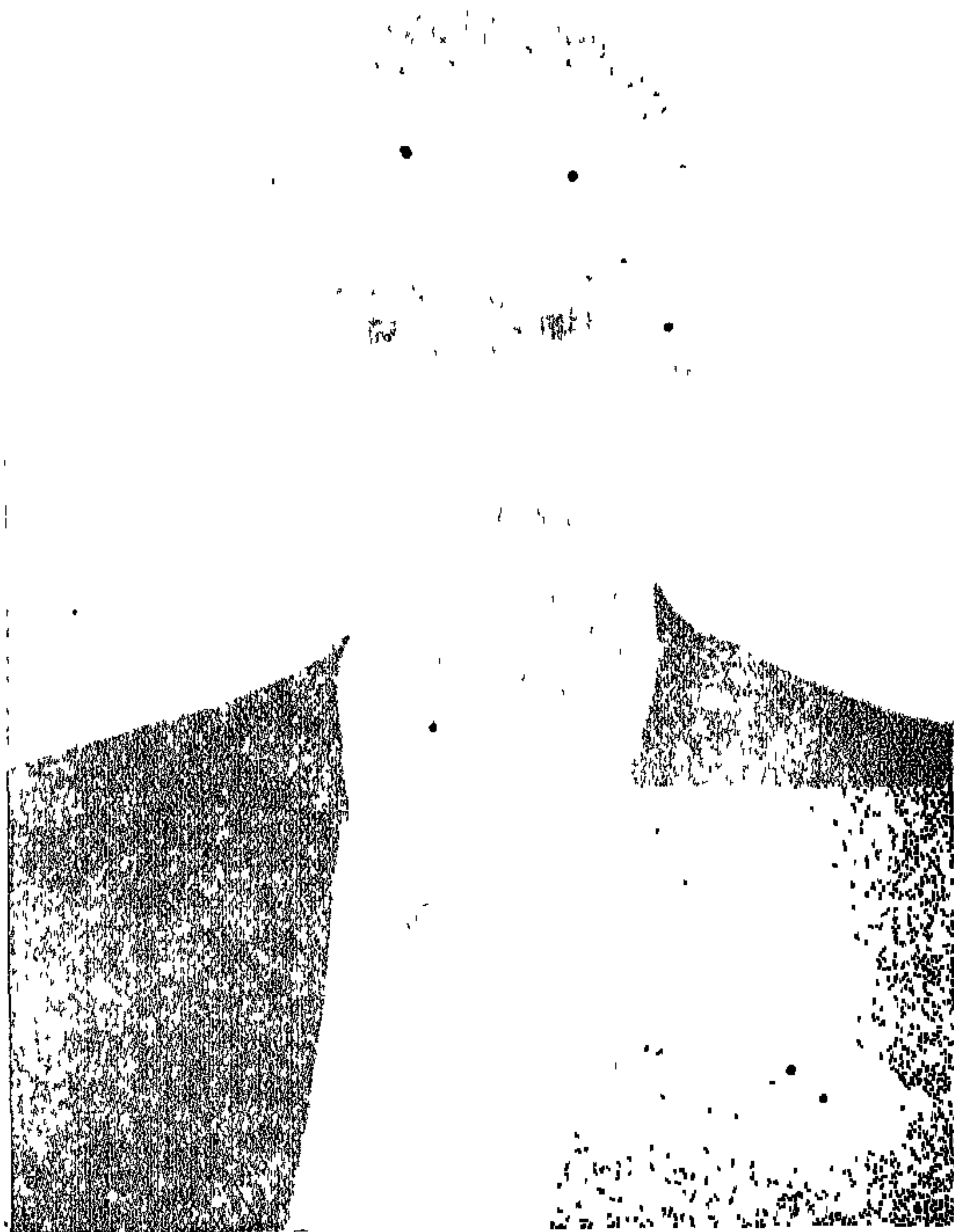
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CONTENTS



DHIRENDRA NATH MAJUMDAR 1903 - 1960.

Academic Career of the Late Professor D. N. Majumdar

(On my request Professor Majumdar was kind enough to prepare this biographical note in the year 1959 for my use. Certain changes have been made here and there to make the information up-to-date. —*Editor*)

Born June 3, 1903 ; educated at Dacca Government College, University College, Calcutta, and Cambridge University, and Galton Laboratory, London, England ; Matric 1st Division, Intermediate in Science—1st Division ; B. A. with distinction ; M. A. 1st Class first, Premchand Roychand Scholar, Calcutta University (1927), Mouat Gold Medalist (1929) (Calcutta University) ; Ph. D. from Cambridge England (1935). President of the Anthropology and Archaeology section Indian Science Congress (1939). Fellow of the National Institute of Sciences (1940). Appointed to deliver the Wathodkar Memorial Readership lectures by the Nagpur University (1946). Awarded Research Medal by the Gujrat Research Society, Bombay (1950). Awarded Annandale Memorial Gold Medal by the Asiatic Society (Bengal) for contributions to the study of Anthropology in Asia (1958).

Visiting Professor, Cornell University (1952–53) Visiting Professor, London University, School of Oriental and African Studies (1957–58). Participant by invitation of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York, in the symposium on World Status of Anthropology (1952). Appointed United Nations' delegate to the World Population Conference, held in Rome (1954). Chairman, Section of Social Relations, International Conference on Human Relations (1956), Member, Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, Government of India. Member, American Association of Physical Anthropologists. Member, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. Also member of the Association of Human Biologists (London). General President, Second All India Sociological Conference (1957)

Author of more than 200 original papers in Anthropology. Author of the following books :*

1. A Tribe in Transition, Longmans Green & Co , (Lond.) 1937.

*For complete bibliography of Prof. Majumdar's publication. See Gopala Saran's note on Prof. Majumdar in The Eastern Anthropologist Vol XIV No. 2, 1961.

2. Fortunes of Primitive Tribes, Census Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh (1944).

3. Races and Cultures of India, Asia Publishers (1958-III Edition).

4. Matrix of Indian Culture, Nagpur University Publication (1948).

5. Race Realities in Gujarat, Gujarat Research Society Publication (1958).

6. The Affairs of a Tribe, Universal Publishers (1952).

7. Introduction to Social Anthropology, Asia Publishing House, third edition (1958)—jointly with Dr. T. N. Madan.

8. Race Problems in Asia, jointly with Dr. I. Karve, Indian Council of World Affairs (1952).

9. Bhartiya Sanskriti Ke Upadan, Asia Publishing House (1958)

10. Caste and Communication in an Indian Village, Asia Publishing House, (1958).

11. Social Contours of an Industrial City. Kanpur. Asia Publishing House (1959).

12 The Silhouette of an Indian Village, Programme Evaluation Organisation, Planning Commission, (in Press).

Besides the above, he published jointly with Prof. P. C Mahalanobis, P R. S., and Dr. C. R. Rao, U. P. Anthropo-metric Survey Report (1960), and 'Ethnological Contours of Bengal', Jointly with Prof. C. R. Rao.

Editor of the 'Eastern Anthropologist', 'Prachpya Manav Vaignanik' and International Directory of Anthropologists; formerly of 'Man in India'.

Joined Lucknow University in 1927 as Lecturer in Anthropology, and then promoted to Readership and Professorship. Since 1949-50, he was Professor of Anthropology at Lucknow University. Seven students under him obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Lucknow University on various anthropological topics.

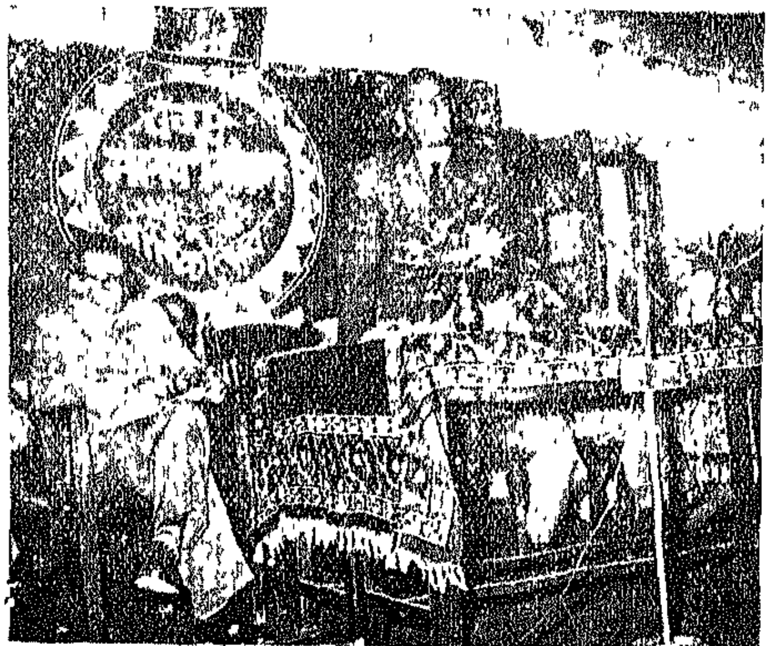
Prof. Majumdar died suddenlly from a cerebral haemorrhage on the 31st May, 1960 at Lucknow in his full glory.

Professor Majumdar is delivering his presidential address to An All India Seminar on Culture Analysis of contemporary societies, America, organised by Council of Social and Cultural Research, Bihar at Ranchi in the Year 1959.



Seated from the right Dr Dukhan Ram Vice chancellor, Bihar University, Dr. Ruth Widmayer of Washington University and Dr. Bisbane of Albion University, Georgia.

Dr. Majumdar delivering his presidential address to the Fifth Annual Function of Bihar University Anthropology Club in year 1956



FOREWORD

Professor D. N. Majumdar was deeply interested in the religion of primitive Indian tribes. In some of his writings there is an indication that he also thought that many of the superior ideas in Hindu religion were already present among our brethren inhabiting the mountains and jungles of India. It has, therefore, been in the fitness of things to dedicate a collection of essays on various aspects of religion in India in memory of Professor Majumdar.

The contributors who have combined to offer their respect to the memory of the departed come from various fields and also from various countries. It is an indication of the high respect with which Professor Majumdar was held by his colleagues in many parts of the world.

It is good that practically all the papers forming the present volume are based upon original investigation. They cover a wide range from the way religion is practised by rural folk in different parts of India to an analysis of certain complex beliefs present among tribal people and which have become modified on account of contact with Hinduism. Some of the papers relate specifically to one or other aspects of the Hindu faith. One also deals with certain reformatory movements which have taken place within the folds of Hinduism; while the subject-matter of two is formed by several "revivalist" movements which have occurred among tribal folk in portions of eastern and northern India.

Readers will appreciate the wealth of material which has thus been gathered and will also notice that the picture of Indian religion which emerges is also of a very rich quality. It not only shows how Hinduism in its broader philosophical reaches, as well as through its very peculiar social organization, has affected the life and society of rural folk, but also offers a picture of how some indigenous beliefs and practices of the so-called aboriginal people have gone a long way in shaping the very structure of Hindu religious thought and beliefs.

In offering this brief foreword to the present collection of essays, I feel highly honoured by being able to join with a number of brilliant scholars in paying my homage to Professor Majumdar who almost became, for a time, an embodiment of whatever was progressive in Indian anthropology.

Calcutta, 15. 7. 61. *N. K. Bose*

INTRODUCTION

It is a common-place observation that the seed parishes yielding place to a number of off-springs. Professor Majumdar is dead but he is survived all over the country by his students, and all over the world by his admirers. His death has been warmly and widely mourned all over the world, and the recognition of his work as also his contributions to Indian Anthoropology are amply reflected from the intimate references that have been made about him in the professional journals of India and abroad. Professor Majumdar was an institution in himself in Indian Anthropology, and one of his British colleagues has rightly written with feeling that "it was difficult to think of Indian Anthropology without Majumdar for he had so long been Indian Anthropology" (quoted from A. A. Vol. 63 No 2 Part I : 372).

Among many places and institutions, Bihar has been greatly associated with the Late Professor Majumdar. He respected Ranchi as his place of anthropological Pilgrimage, and Ranchi recognised in him a great friend of Adivasi and the most illustrious scholar of Indian Anthropology. Professor Majumdar started his apprenticeship in anthropological fieldwork under Rai Bahadur Sri S.C. Roy at Ranchi and spent many long years of his youth among the hills and jungles of Singhbhum, and worked hard to put the Tribal Bihar on the ethnological map of the world by publishing his first but theoretically sophisticated monograph on the Ho tribe of Singbhum. It was Professor Majumdar who impressed upon the Government of Bihar to start the teaching and research centre for Anthropology at Ranchi, *which was later organised with his close co-operation* He also trained one of the founder lecturers (the author of these lines) of this department who was sent to him as a State Scholar of the Government of Bihar for advanced training in Anthropology. Professor Majumdar's interest in this Department did not stop with its establishment. As his follow-up programme, he continued to guide us in the best possible manner to organise teaching and research in the Department. He used to come to us very frequently every year and used to participate in the University seminars and symposia that we used to organise from time to time. Bihar was not only his first field for research, he also planned to make Bihar his last field. He was to join at Patna as the Director of A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Science but his death stood in our

way in having him once again in Bihar for guiding researches in the field of social Science.

What Bihar has gained from Prof Majumdar, she cannot pay him back. When the news of his death reached Ranchi, everybody was taken aback. Condolence meetings were organised by anthropological institutions, and the local and Patna news papers came out with editorial comments regarding the qualities of the head and heart of the Late Prof. Majumdar At the Annual meetings of the Council of Social and Cultural Research Bihar and Ranchi University Anthropology Club, moving and warm tributes were paid to him, and his portrait was unvailed on the 2nd August, 1960 in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering by Prof N. K Bose, Director of Anthropological Survey of India. We, however, were not at all satisfied with this alone. We wanted to bring out a Memorial Volume in honour of the great departed soul We contacted many anthropologists, sought their suggestions and then final decisions to bring out this volume was arrived at.

While planning for this volume, several alternative approaches came to our mind. First, to review the development of Anthropology in India during the life-time of Prof. Majumdar, second, to evaluate his contributions to the various branches and fields of anthropology and the third, to select any one important aspect of his contribution to Indian anthropology, and then invite papers on the similar topics from the anthropologists and social scientists who have been engaged in similar researches in India. The first could have given us an appraisal of the recent history of Anthropology in India, the second would have presented a total picture of the works of the Late Prof. Majumdar and the third, if planned carefully, could give us a perspective and an insight in general understanding of certain processes and trends of Indian Society as such. Considering both academic and practical factors, our choice fell for the third approach, and it was decided to invite papers on Indian culture in context with its religious beliefs and practices. Religion, as it is our common-place experience provides the anchor-sheet of Indian culture, and we assumed that an anthropological approach to the study of religion in India will help us in exploring and understanding the dominant characteristics of Indian culture and civilisation.

With this approach in mind, it was decided to request scholars and researchers to contribute papers on "Aspects of religion in Indian Society", and as it will be evident from the text of the volume, the response was exceedingly encouraging. This effort has enabled me to bring together in one volume fresh materials on religious

beliefs and practices of various communities living in different parts of India and practising different "patterns of religions". Then, again, we have been able to identify the different approaches of the authors to the researches for understanding this basic aspect of Indian culture.

Sri Gopala Saran admirably reviews the contribution of the Late Prof. Majumdar to the study of religion in India. Marriott, *Aiyappan, Sharma and Srivastava contribute such papers which* throw light on some of the dominant and distinguishing characteristics of Indian culture and philosophy. They, among many things, bring out in their respective ways, the unity and varieties within Indian society in terms of its religious and philosopohical thought and action.

The pepers that follow are of more specific nature, and the units of study are mostly delimited to respective villages. Carstairs and Mathur describe the complexes of religious beliefs and practices as studied by them in three typical villages of Rajastan, and a Malwa village in Madhya Pradesh respectively. Singh tells us about religion in a Sikh village while Vidyarthi describes the "sacred complex" of a tribal hilly village of Bihar. All these papers, besides giving rich ethnographic data from specific areas are also of theoretical importance, and throw light on the cultural processes of India generally. Carstairs identifies different types of modification in and categories of religious life in the Rajasthan villages—largely a combination of orthodox Hinduism and primitive animism. Mathur observes similar phenomena but his point of interest is to describe religion in terms of the caste structure of the village Singh, while analysing the religious beliefs and practices of the Sikh village records the impact, and assimilation of worships of tribal and Hindu Gods as well as of the Muslim *Pirs* into their concepts of Sikhism. He finds it convenient to describe the religious beliefs and practices of the Sikh village under the following four categories : (i) belief in ancestral and village gods (ii) Hindu gods and goddesses (iii) Muslim Pirs and (iv) Sikh gurus and saints. Vidyarthi's paper, methodological in nature, firstly describes the conception of the Maler about the spirits and supernatural powers and then portrays the "sacred complex" of the village in terms of the three analytic concepts : sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialists. At a level of abstraction, it suggests that the "sacred complex" in Benderi, considered culturally, is essentially little traditional and structurally it is exclusively of local importance. Again, the "sacred complex" reflects its interrelationship with local ecology, agricultural operation and above all

with the local society.. In an implicit manner the paper also proposes certain terms and methods for describing religion of a particular community which may be applied elsewhere.

Then, there are papers that cover still smaller unit for their study, though their theoretical implications are of wider consequence. Madan, Atal, T. R. Singh, Chattopadhayay, Sahay, Sinha analyse certain religious features in a particular village. The different religious features—festivals, cults, deities—of a village have been described and analysed by them in a very meaningful and methodical manner. Madan brings out the importance of *Herath* ritual in the re-affirmation of *social solidarity*—between gods and human beings, kin, affines, parents and children, neighbours, co-villagers and friends. He further uses his ethnographic materials on the *Herath* to demostrate at least partially Nadel's four main "competences" of religion · explanation of the universe, economic ethic support of social structure, and 'specific experiences and stimulations' Atal's study of the cult of *Bheru* throws light to confirm, further, the processes of combination and compromise of Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic traditions on a ritual level what have already been indicated on the village level by Carstairs, I. P. Singh and Mathur. T. R. Singh analyses the position and function of various deities in the village pantheon and classifies them in terms of their hierarchical position, their power or virtue, their acceptable offerings, their priestly affiliations, "spread" etc His data clearly bring out the intermingling of traditions at the levels of deities and the associated rituals. Chattopadhyay firstly, describes the *Charak* festival that he observed and studied in a village of the Midnapur District of West Bengal, and secondly, he brings out the magical and such other characteristics of the festivals which again reflect the interaction of Hindu and tribal traditions on the level of the festival. Sahay has chosen a different dimension of cultural dynamics which he studies in terms of two Oraon villages of Chotanagpur. He examines the impact of "Christian model" on the tribal culture and tries to analyse the nature and extent to which indigenous culture has been readjusted, reorganised or survived in the new religious set-up. Surajit Sinha, on the other hand, studies a Bhumij village which is largely under the influence of the Hindus, and he examines the nature and extent of interactions of tribal and Hindu religions insofar as they are reflected in the cycle of festivals observed in that village.[1]

1. This paper has been published only in the book edition of the *Memorial Volume*.

Then, there is another set of papers in which religious features have been described on some-what general plans. Ram Ratan's unit of study is the Bhangis of Delhi and his problem of study in this paper is to analyse the nature of "Sanskritisation" among the untouchable Bhangis insofar as they have been converted to several Hindu sects. For Sher, the Shansis of the Punjab as such, is the unit of study and he presents general description about the religious beliefs and practices of this ex-criminal tribe of Punjab in all its detail. In the field of tribal religion as well some such papers of general type have been contributed. Ehrenfels writes a valuable paper on the problem of the determination of sex of the deities of the Matrilineal Khasi. S. P. Sinha's interest in studying tribal culture is more or less historical and biographical. He brings out the religious teaching of Birsa Bhagwan, a noted Adivasi religious and political leader of Bihar who preached in the year 1895–1900. Jay's article is still more broad-based as he draws materials from more than half dozen tribes of Bihar to illustrate the process of revitalisation among the Adivasi societies in India

Unfortunately very few competent studies of Indian Muslim have been done so far in India and I could not get any good papers on this subject except one by Dupree who has done an exhaustive study of the Muslim of Afganistan. In this brilliant paper, Dupree examines the sacred and secular roles of the *Mullās* in the changing and technologically-directed society of Afganishtan.

By giving this sketchy account my purpose is not to high-light the theoretical, methodological and substansive qualities of each paper but my concern here is only to acquaint the readers with the wide varieties of topics and areas that have been covered in this volume. The researchers from the different parts of India report about certain aspects of religion prevalent in the respective areas of their fieldwork. There are papers on Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Tribal religion, Ex-criminal tribe and Islam ; there are papers on the functioning of religion in the villages of different parts of India ; and then on cults, festivals and deities of India. In this way, we have tried to bring to-gether empirical and field data on aspects of religion practised in different parts of India.

It may be further added that these papers are of different theoretical and substantive importance but methodologically, they present a faithful, intimate and microscopic depiction of different aspects of Indian religion. In them we find the reflections of the religions of the day-to-day life which, of course are far removed from the theological reconstruction. On the ethnographic plane, the

volume mirrors the nature and extent of religious unity and varieties found in Indian society in terms of religion and on the historical plane, it helps us in understanding the cultural processes in India. Taken together, the volume acquaints us with the dominant themes of Indian Civilisation.

The volume has been possible only because of the active co-operation of many of the social scientists and anthropologists who have taken the pains for writing papers for this issue. I am especially indebted to our foreign contributors Doctors Marriott, Carstairs, Dupree and Mr. Jay who have contributed valuable papers for this Memorial Volume. The members of the staff of the Department of Lucknow have been also very helpful and we are indebted to Drs. Mathur, Madan and Mr. Gopala Saran who have written papers for the volume. I hear that another Memorial Volume, Anthropology in India : Essays in the Memory of Prof. Majumdar, is being published from Lucknow While we will be happy to welcome the volume, we will hope that something more will be done by University of Lucknow in the memory of Late Prof. Majumdar, who started his career at Lucknow and who died at Lucknow in his full glory.

I am equally indebted to all my contributors including Drs. Aiyappan, Erensfels, Sharma and Singh without whose help and co-operation this volume would have not been published. I am especially grateful to them for correcting the final proofs of their respective papers. The success and utility of this volume are owing to their valuable contributions. To Prof N. K Bose my indebtedness knows no bounds. He has always taken keen interests in all our academic works and has unreservedly placed his scholarship and time at our disposal By adding a foreword to the Memorial Volume published in shape of a book, he has done a great service to us.

I am also with thanks to acknowledge the grants-in-aid that we received from the Education Department, Government of Bihar for bringing out this volume. My special acknowledgement goes to Messrs Kedar Nath Ram Nath who have taken all care to produce this volume in a book form in more or less flawless manner for the wider circulation. In preparing the index my pupil, Sri S. B. Sahay and Prof S. P. Sinha of Dinapur College have been very helpful, and I record my appreciation for their help.

Ranchi,
August 15, 1961.

L. P. Vidyarthi

PROFESSOR MAJUMDAR AND ANTHROPOLOGY OF INDIAN RELIGION

By Gopala Sarana

In the death of Professor D N. Majumdar (1903–1960) the country has lost a great savant, a noble son. Anthropology in India has been deprived of its most vigourous and vocal exponent, its unquestioned leader. Even in his fifty-eighth year, the doyen of the Indian anthropologists, was far from being old in either body or mind. He possessed a peculiarly exuberant spirit. He would enthuse and infect all those who came in his close contacts with a unique passion for hard work. The magnetic charm of the personality of this great teacher attracted lots of students to the Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University, of which he was the creator. In only a short span of ten years he had been able to put the Department on a very firm footing. He had succeeded in building up an enviable reputation for it both in side the country as well as abroad.

Prof. Majumdar's approach to the problems was anything but dogmatic or doctrinaire. His tolerant spirit and wide catholicity were worthy of a great scholar like him. His indefatigable industry, his profound and wide scholarship, his fine reasoning and his excellent expression are still 'living' models for his students. In all these years Lucknow had forged ahead a sort of unity of approach. Certain leading foreign anthropologists have named that 'Lucknow School of Anthropology'. But Majumdar was too broad-minded to foster any rigid and regimented 'school-ties' amongst his students. Like acculturation Majumdar's relation with his students was a two-way process. In leaving a lasting impression on his students—like a dominant culture—Majumdar, in turn, showed distinct signs of having been influenced by them. Like a great man he made no secret of it. He was ever ready to learn. That is why he loved the company of youngmen. This fact endeared him to the young people who admired, respected and loved him from the cores of their hearts. Dr. T.N. Madan has very rightly said that "the Department (of Anthropology at the University of Lucknow) and the students who passed out of it to spread out into the far corners of the country, like his earlier pupils, are the greatest contribution Majumdar has made to

Indian anthropology" It could be possible because he had a knack of collecting good and sincere students around him and of keeping them engaged in work.

Prof. Majumdar was born in the year 1903 at Patna. After an extremely brilliant career he obtained his Master's degree in Anthropology from Calcutta University in 1924. In more than thirty years of active academic career many honours and distinctions came Dr. Majumdar's way. As early as the year 1926 he became the Premchand Roychand Scholar of his Alma Mater. He joined the Lucknow University as a Lecturer in primitive economics in the year 1928 and was awarded Mouat Gold Medal in the following year. In 1935 he obtained a distinction rare for an Indian to achieve in those days. He was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Cambridge that year. In 1937 he was elected president of the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress. At a comparatively young age of 38 years in 1941 he was elected a Fellow of the National Institute of Sciences of India. Dr. Majumdar was promoted to the post of Reader in Anthropology at the Lucknow University in the year 1946. The same year the Nagpur University honoured him by inviting him to deliver 'Sri Mahadeo Hari Wathodkar Foundation Lectures'. In 1950 he became Professor of Anthropology at Lucknow University. He received the Gujarat Research Society Gold Medal for his contributions to Physical Anthropology that very year. The greatest honour came to Prof. Majumdar in 1952 when the Wenner-Gren Foundation invited him to represent India, Pakistan and Ceylon at the Wenner-Gren Foundation International Symposium on Anthropology at New York. In 1952-53 he was a Visiting Professor at Cornell University. He was elected a Foreign Fellow of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists in 1953. He was a member of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. He attended its Rome session as a delegate in 1954. More than once he was Overseas' Professor of Anthropology at the University of London. He lectured at several Universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. In 1958 he was awarded the Annandale Gold Medal for his contributions to Asian Anthropology. Pro. Majumdar was also a member of the Research Programmes' Committee of the Planning Commission. He was the author of a number of epoch-making books on Indian Anthropology. Since the number of papers which he wrote in the scientific journals runs in hundreds only a list of his books is being provided below :

1. A Tribe in Transition : Longmans Green & Co., London, 1937.

2. The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes.	The Universal Publishers, Ltd., Lucknow, 1944.
3. The Matrix of Indian Culture.	The Universal Publishers, Ltd., Lucknow, 1947.
4 The Affairs of a Tribe.	: The Universal Publishers, Ltd., Lucknow, 1950
5. Race Relations in Cultural Gujarat	: Gujarat Research Society, Bombay 1950.
6. An Introduction to Social Anthropology (co-author T.N. Madan)	: Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1956.
7. Races and Cultures of India (3rd Revised Edition)	Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958
8. Bharatiya Sanskriti Ke Upadan (Hindi)	: Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958.
9. Caste and Communication in an Indian Village	Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958
10. Race Elements in Bengal (co-author C R Rao)	Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960.
11. Social Contours of an Industrial City.	Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960.

(Two books are in the press)

1. Races and Cultures of India (4th Edition, Revised)	Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
2. Himalayan Polyandry	Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

(Two books were ready for the press at the time of his death)

1. A Village on the Fringe
2. Chhor Ka EK Gaon : (Hindi version of the foregoing title)

Yet another book in Hindi on "Early Man–Origin and Culture" was under preparation in co-authorship with Gopala Sarana.

Majumdar was a versatile genius. But he did not scratch the surface only. Whatever field of anthropology—physical or social-cultural—did he enter he left behind permanent marks of the depth and the high quality of his work there. Dr. Majumdar came to anthropology in, what he himself called, 'The Constructive Period' of Indian anthropology beginning from 1920 This was the time of the so-called unofficial ethnography originated by the late Sri S.C. Roy. He was the first ethnographer in this country to initiate the tradition of the first hand field' investigation spread over several

years conducted through the tribal dialects.' Roy tried to make the best use of the anthropological techniques developed in those days. In the early thirties many books on the Indian caste system were also published. But through his book, 'A Tribe in Transition' it was Prof. Majumdar who, in the words of J.H. Hutton, marked a 'new departure in the Indian ethnological literature'. In the aforesaid book he had presented an ethnographic study with a difference. Few could dare attempt an acculturation study which 'dealt primarily with the forms of a dissolving social structure' in those days. Throughout the whole of his academic career Dr. Majumdar remained interested in the study of culture contacts. But his interests and methods never became out of date. It was well said by a colleague (Dr. T.N. Madan) in 1956 : "Today as ever before during the last twenty years he (Prof. D.N Majumdar) is spearheading a new development in Indian anthropology." We do not know of any Indian anthropologist other than the late Dr. Majumdar who has, besides writing tribal monographs, studied a variety of tribes in transition, has presented a model of anthropological 'village studies', and has at the same time made a successful attempt to demarcate the social contours of an industrial city ; all done in masterly fashion.

II

J.A. Macculloch (1904 : 13) informs us that the word 'religion' is derived from the Latin word *religio*. According to Cicero the word *religio* itself was derived from *relegere* which means 'to gather up' or 'to consider'. On this basis Macculloch felt that for Cicero "*religio* meant consideration and thought in what concerned the worship of the gods, or simply reverence and respect." (1904 : 13) But the early Christain theologists felt that *religio* came from *religare* which meant 'to bind back'. Thus to them *religio* conveyed the idea of holding back from certain actions, or to be more specific, 'restraint or fear of gods.' Coming closer to our own times we find the great German philosopher, Enamuel Kant, equating religion with morality while the English author Matthew Arnold calls it 'morality touched with emotion'. The notable change in these definitions of religion is the absence of reference to 'god'. Max Muller was obviously not doing so when he said that religion was "a mental faculty enabling man to apprehend the Infinite under different names and disguises" (quoted in Macculloch 1904 : 13).

The above definitions of religion have perhaps academic interest. But the really orthodox, dogmatic and matter of fact Christian view of religion can be found in Dr. Johnson's contention, which

Lienhardt has expressed thus: "Johnson thought that the fullness of religion lay in the presence of a theology and a church, a large measure of intellectual formulation and social formalization. For him, to learn about religion was to find out what people new of its doctrines. 'Gross men' and savages could not know enough for their knowledge to form the basis of serious study." (1956 : 310–11) Quite contrary to it for the great pragmatic philosopher William James special conditions of the individual conscience formed the bases or the grounds of religious phenomena. Since religion manifested 'purely interior life' it was not a formal duty but a matter of aspirations.

In the seventies and the eighties of the last century several anthropological classics were published. The year 1871 is particulary notable. The two great pioneers—Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Burnett Tylor—published their books, namely, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity*—and *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, that very year. Lowie confidently predicted in 1937 that Morgan's fame would ultimately rest on the *Systems* for his unique distinction in "literally creating the study of kinship systems as a branch of comparative sociology" (p 62). This profecy has certainly come true. But Tylor's contribution was no less spectacular. Through his *Primitive Culture* "the word culture with its modern technical or anthropological meaning was established in English by Tylor in 1871" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952 : 9). *Primitive Culture* was a landmark in another way also. It contained a spirited discussion of the 'primitive' belief in 'anima'. Tylor's exposition of the concept of animism was so masterly that for quite a long time the contemporary primitives continued to be called 'animists'—not a very happy or appropriate usage. Tylor put forward as a "minimum definition of Religion, the Belief in Spiritual Beings". It might not have been a very satisfactory definition of religion, but it definitely helped in expanding the content and the meaning of the word. The speculative accounts of the origins of religion as much as its ethnographic field studies have finally set all controversies at rest by proving that religion is a common denominator of all human cultures.

In a way this universal category of culture, that is religion, is, a quite elusive phenomenon. It is very difficult to comprehend because, in Ruth Benedict's words, "it is by no means obvious upon which of the specifically human endowments it is built up" (1938 : 627). In Malinowskian terms the basic needs for the

satisfaction of which the social organisations and the economic institutions spring up may be traceable. But it is not so about religion. This is the reason that in his empirical study of the contemporary primitives the 'civilised' investigator can understand his client better when the latter says that "his people have been attacked by an enemy, or birds have spoilt the crops" rather than when he is found saying that "his people are being killed by a spirit, or that the birds which spoilt the crops were sent by withcraft" (Leinhardt 1956 : 312) Dr. Majumdar had no doubt about the universality of religion. He held that the objective evaluation, within our competence, of our problems becomes possible because of 'the scientific approach'. "The solutions of primitive man's problems are mysterious and occult" because the primitive man "is tied to dogmas based on beliefs which are emotionally determined" (1958 : 398) The trend of anthropological studies has been towards "an increasingly elastic and comprehensive view of religion". But problem in Tylor's days was different from what it is today. Malinowski has characterised it aptly in these words : "Tylor had still to refute the fallacy that there are primitive peoples without reigion. Today we are somewhat perplexed by the discovery that to a savage all is religion, that he perpetually lives in a world of mysticism and ritualism" (1948 : 7).

Malinowski was not in favour of defining religion as such. He had opined that "as an "appeal to higher powers" religion could,' only be distinguished from magic and not defined in general" (1948 : 19). But Drs. Majumdar and Madan do not feel so. According to them religion "is the expression of the manner, and type, of adjustment effected by a people with their conception of the supernatural" (1956 : 151). This attitude, they say, is manifested in the shape of beliefs and rituals. In his Races and Cultures of India Dr. Majumdar, probably under the influence of Durkheim, had used the word 'rites' instead of 'rituals'. According to this earlier view 'mere beliefs' do not constitute religion. "It is rites which make religion a living force" (1958 : 398). But along with Dr Madan he expressed the opinion that "all religions, primitive and modern, have this base of belief and ritual—(and)—Beliefs are a charter for the rituals, as also a rationalisation of the same. These beliefs ensure that the rituals will be observed." This change in emphasis is notable. In his later monographic studies—both tribal and rural—Dr. Majumdar seems to have emphasised the 'rite' or the 'ritual' aspect of religion much more than the belief aspect.

Professor Majumdar was fully convinced of the validity of

Jung's contention that religion was "an essential feature of human life without which the attainment of full integration of human personality is not possible" (1956 : 152). At the same time he was fully aware of the vital role religion played in the life of a people. About the primitive man he felt that "his religious conceptions exercise(d) a strong, if not a determining, influence on his activities". In his village study, under the sub-heading "Religion Vital in Rural Life", he opines that "modern atheistic tendencies not having touched the village very much, religion plays a tremendous part in the life of the villager" (1958a . 233). In spite of the quarrels and misunderstandings within the family, Dr. Majumdar informs us, "religion plays an important part in the context of family life and at every stage of the individuals life. From the cradle to the cremation ground, and for a period even after the body has been cremated, life for the villagers is a round of rituals and ceremonies" (1958a : 219). Dr. Majumdar was not one of those anthropologists who would indulge in 'speculations' about the origins of human institutions But in the course of his field work among the Hos of Kolhan he seems to have been very much impressed by the rites and ceremonies connected with the dead. It is to be kept in view that some time earlier, to be more exact in 1925, Malinowski had published his classic essay entitled 'Magic, Science and Religion' in J. A. Needham's (ed.) *Science, Religion and Reality*. Written in 1927 Dr. Majumdar's statement that "death is a surprise to the primitive mind as well as a source of apprehension" reminds one of Malinowski's similar, but earlier, remarks in the above mentioned essay. In that very essay Prof. Majumdar has mentioned that some authorities "hold that religion owes its inception to the cult of the dead". He further exhorts that "it is to death that primitive rites were addressed and the first ceremonies were those of the dead and the religion began with the cult of the dead" (1927 : 37).

With regard to the concept of primitive mind as well as the dichotomy between magic and religion Dr. Majumdar's approach is British rather than French. The difference between modern man and his primitive compatriot in apprehending the reality of nature, he tells us, "is not organic but circumstantial" (1958 . 400). In his hairsplitting distinction between magic and religion Dr. Majumdar has been obviously influenced by Frazer. But the Indian data—both tribal and non-tribal—which he has used as illustrative material make his presentation original as well as authentic. Frazer's impact seems apparent when he states that "it is believed that the magical approach is the more primitive" (1956 : 159). But this does not seem to be

his final opinion on the matter. In his *Races and Cultures of India* we find him saying something quite different : "The intimate relationship between magic and religion, while it makes the *priority of either difficult to prove*, puts a premium on human efforts and initiative" (1958 : 402). About the ultimate purpose magic and religion serve Dr. Majumdar's explanation seems to be Malinowskian both in letter and spirit. At one place he thinks that they are two ways of tiding over crises (1956 . 158). In the other book he clearly mentions that "magic and religion serve the self same purpose viz., that of restoring confidence in times of danger or crises. When magic fails, religion helps and both may partially contribute towards tiding over social or economic crises" (1958 : 402). In discussing animism and manaism together in light of the available data from India he gives us further proof of having abandoned 'ism' definition of religion. His elaboration of the key concepts is not a carbon copy of any other person. He seems to be making a bold but original assertion when he acknowledges that knowledge must triumph over pseudoknowledge yet advocates that "magic plays its role in society and in its extremely differentiated form it hinges on beliefs in a mystical impersonal force called *mana*, *wakua* or *bonga*"(1958 : 401).

Of the several exotic words which have become commonplace in the English language through the anthropological sources 'mana' is particularly worth mentioning here. Codrington defined this Melanasian word thus : "It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural, but it shows itself in physical force or in any kind of power of excellence which a man possesses. This mana is not fixed in anything and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone". Codrington further elaborates *mana* as "a force altogether distinct from physical power which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control". *Manaism* was the theory of the origin of religion propounded by some people. They called it the 'pre-animistic' stage in the evolution of religion. According to this theory (*manaism*) the earliest conception was not that of a 'soul' but that of "a certain understandable, impersonal, non-material, and unindividualised supernatural power which takes abode in all the objects...that exist in the world" (1956 : 155-56). In the field of the anthropology of Indian religion Dr. Majumdar will always be remembered for his concept of '*Bongaism*'. *Bonga* may rightly be called the Indian parallel to the

Melanasian term '*mana*'. In support of our contention we are giving below a quotation from Prof. Majumdar in order that that may be compared with Codrington's remarks on the concept of 'mana' : "*Bonga* is conceived by the Ho as a power, one that pervades all space. It is indefinite and impersonal to start with. That is why it is believed to take any shape or form. This power gives life to all animals and plants, 'it encourages growth in plants, it brings down rain, storm, hail, flood and cold. It kills and destroys evils, stops epidemics, cures diseases, gives currents to rivers, vemon to snakes and strength to tigers, bears and wolves'. The vague idea of power later on condenses itself and is identified with things or objects of his *environment, as the latter is regarded by primitive man as part of* himself" (1950 : 278).

Professor Majumdar did not propound his theory of *Bongaism* with a view to "build any hypothesis about the 'roots of primitive religion" (1940 : 63–64). But he felt that his ethnographic account of the religious complex of beliefs among the Munda, the Ho and other cognate tribes of Chota Nagpur "would provide some evidence about religion *as it was*". At that time Dr. Majumdar also thought that to the history of religion nothing was more important than "beliefs and practices which claim(ed) an antiquity and are (were) regarded with sanctity by the people concerned" (1940 : 64). This statement is a debatable one. His contention seems to be much less controversial and, probably more useful, when he says that *mana* or *bonga* or an impersonal force "I should think forms the substratum of primitive religion everywhere" (1940 · 68)

Dr. Majumdar's explanation of *Bongaism* as it appears in its final form in his *Affairs of a Tribe* falls in line with the modern anthropological trends in the study of religion. He is here found citing authorities on psycho-analysis and *Gestalt* psychology in support of his arguments. The basis of *Bongaism*, he tells us, lies in "a general emotional attitude towards the entire primitive milieu". Taking note of the results of *Gestalt* psychology's experiments with animals he opines that in his environment primitive man is not adjusted to any particular unity but to the situation as a whole. The primitive man feels a sort of organic oneness with the environment in a sense that he is in the environment and the objects of environment are parts of himself. Appearance of any strange element brings about a disorientation in "all the desires and trends of action...from their setting in things". The result is pain which arises through the tension because of the need of new adjustment. "As has been shown by psychoanalytic research". Dr. Majumdar informs us, "pain involved in new adjust-

ment is translated into fear". The alienation has set forth because of the introduction of the strange element. The environment, no doubt, *remains animated as it was formerly, though it has become strange* The fear and bewilderment sets in because the primitive man does not "view his personality, the pictorial self as distinct from the environment". When he starts doing this the environment becomes "a set of other selves subject to the Law of Participation" As a consequence of it the living environment "becomes gradually full of living persons or *Bongas*" (1950 : 279). Dr. Majumdar's explanation is a good example of a 'concious' model constructed by an anthropologist to interpret a social phenomenon As an example of the "home-made" model of the Hos his following statement seems notable: "When the curiosity of a child is raised by any mechanical contrivance however simple or crude it may be, it is immediately satisfied by calling it Bonga, he understands Bonga, in the same way as his father or any adult of his tribe does, it gives him a vague idea about a power, the nature of which he does not know, nor the adults of his tribe would worry about. The very mention of the word "Bonga' is enough, and his reactions can be easily anticipated" (N D. : 65–67).

The constitution of the Indian Republic recognises certain special groups of peoples. Certain special priviliges have to be shown to and certain unusual benefits have to be provided for them for a stipulated period of time. These privileged groups of peoples are mentioned in the constitution as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Only three decades ago the latter were usually called 'animists'. It was Prof. J. H. Hutton who advocated that the religions of the primitive peoples should be called 'tribal religions' rather than 'animism'. Dr. Majumdar has said that, "animism is a typical trait of primitive religions". But he has clarified his position by pointing out that "it is not true that primitive man only caters to a constellation of malevolent spirits". According to him 'a creator' always finds a place in every primitive tribe and "this benevolent divinity does not live on human ministration as do the host of evil spirits..." (1958 : 406).

It is well known that on the basis of the wealth of the ethnographic material which was before Dr. Hutton he came to the conclusion that "the tribal religions, ..., represent, as it were, surplus material not yet built into the temple of Hinduism" (1951 : 233). Verrier Elwin is also known to have once felt that if there was likelihood of "some material or social advantage" the tribal peoples were willing to worship a few more gods. Perhaps that is why he thought that the distinction between tribal religions and Hinduism or "the

previous classification into animism and Hinduism is (was) meaning-less" Ghurye also had once opined that the most appropriate nomenclature for the Indian tribal peoples was not 'animists' or 'aboriginals', but 'backward Hindus'. As a student of contact metamorphosis Prof. Majumdar was not unware of the changing patterns of the tribal religions. His very intimate studies of the tribes and castes of the Uttar Pradesh, both from the socio-cultural and the anthropometric-serological angles had made him a very keen judge of the phenomena under consideration. He accepted that the tribal people had "a priesthood comparable to that found among the lower strata of the Hindu society" and "their religious life can (could) hardly be distinguished from that obtained among the lower castes" But he was cautious in his approach. He was not ready to call them 'backward Hindus' According to him "the tribal religions represent today 'marginal religions' a no-man's land between magic and religion, between pseudo-science and science" (1958 . 406) His views seem to be more akin to those of Hutton rather than those of Elwin or Ghurye.

As a true student of acculturation he knew that in their contact with the tribal folk the Hindus were also likely to be affected by the former, though a much lesser degree. He has not quoted Radhakrishnan anywhere but we are sure he was aware of his famous statement that "Hinduism absorbs everything that enters into it, magic or animism, and raises it to a higher level" (1954 : 46). It was, obviously, Prof. Majumdar's wide field experience and his keen empirical observation that backed his observation that "the Hindu has no objection to include in his multi god pantheon a few tribal gods". Radhakrishnan will explain this phenomenon thus Hinduism is a movement, not a position; a process not a result; a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation" (1954 : 129). A Majumdar would usually be quiet on these points. But he was aware of the fact that contact had not been always beneficial to the tribal peoples. Often "the result has proved to be disastrous, a decay of religion has set in", because the tribal people may not learn much about true Hinduism or Christianity.

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CHANGING CHANNELS OF CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN INDIAN CIVILIZATION

McKim Marriott

We see the civilization of India changing before our eyes from a rich old cultural mansion of many levels and varied styles into a more uniform structure comprising a few levels of standard design. One way of understanding this ongoing transformation may be to examine it in relation to changes in channels of cultural transmission[1].

Networks, Centers, Levels, and Specialists

India's indigenous channels of cultural transmission formed very wide and complex networks of many kinds. They connected each small rural community with multiple centers of many types—market towns, seats of different political powers, shrines of diverse deities, educational centers, and so forth Each indigenous center of Indian civilization was at once distinctive and culturally heterogeneous. The area of influence of each center was also likely to overlap broadly with the hinterlands of other centers. Such an organization of networks and centers interrelated many territorial subcultures (Cohn and Marriot, 1958). Articulating these networks were cultural specialists (Singer, 1955-29-30), serving as "hinge groups" (Redfield, 1956 : 43-44) or cultural "brokers" (Wolf, 1956 : 1075-76). There were legions of intermediaries in the networks of Indian civilization, and thus was little need for direct communication between cultural levels. Such a tangled web of indirect and specialized contacts seems to have favored an elaborate cultural stratification and to have conserved and promoted cultural variety (Cohn and Marriott, 1958).

The cultural stratification referred to here as characteristic of past Indian civilization may be defined as a series of broadly coincident distinctions between the more authoritative or widespread cultural traditions, or those which were cultivated by persons of higher standing, or maintained through literary and especially Sanskrit media, on the one hand ; and the popular or local cultural traditions, or those carried on by persons of lower standing, or those existing only in vernacular media, or without literary, on the other hand. Redfield and Singer (1954) have dealt with the extremes of this stratification as a contrast between a "great tradition" and "little tradi-

tions". In actuality, one may always have confronted a more subtly graduated series of relatively greater or lesser, more or less authoritative, more or less wide spread levels (Srinivas, 1952 : 212-18, Singer, 1955, 1958).

That cultural stratification and variety were permitted and promoted by the old networks of communications is shown by several recent studies of cultural transmission. V. Raghavan (1958) lists a large number of media of "popular religious instruction" which for centuries transmitted the messages of the greater Indian traditions to unlettered audiances. Among these media were recitation of fixed oral texts, story telling, singing, drama, and so forth, each medium having its own specialists, often of several kinds To Raghavan's list of traditional media, William McCormack (1958) adds the performance of sacraments of the individual's life cycle and the holding of fairs, these media were significant for followers of the Virasaiva or Lingayat religion and undoubtedly have had importance everywhere in Indian civilization. Shah and Shroff (1958) further show how a caste of genealogists in Gujarat worked to connect their earthly patrons who were not always of the high castes, with ancient, mythical, or even cosmogonic traditions of the prestigious past.

Within a single medium, such as the continuing epic drama, one can see how chains of specialists operated to transmit cultural materials from higher to lower levels. Norvin Hein's description of the Ram Lila (1958) exemplifies the complexity of this process. Following priestly ceremonies, the biography of Ram is cantillated by a specialist, who reads from a famous seventeenth-century poetic text composed in the vernacular of a neighbouring region. This text is itself an adaptation and reworking of an ancient, very widely revered Sanskrit prototype But even the seventeenth-century text is not easily understood by modern audience, and not all parts are of interest; yet it is sacred, and must be read in its entirety. Actors fill this gap, dramatizing the more popular passages while the cantillation continues, but putting these passages into succinct modern speech, accompanied by music and gesture, on the stages provided by local houses and temples. Materials of the Hindu great tradition are and were thus conveyed, altered first to regional, then to parochial and nonliterate forms, by a series of intervening specialists. The transmission of cultural materials through such an old-style network, whether downward as in this complex dramatic movement or upward (Marriott, 1955 : 197-99), typically involved several translations and therefore tended to preserve cultural variety at each level.

Village Structure as a Nonimitative Order

The old structure of Indian rural society was also in several ways inimical to the transmission of cultural materials; to a surprising degree, the old Indian village's social order was a nonimitative order. A case in point is the finding, by John Gumperz, of six distinguishable dialects in a single North Indian village of about five thousand persons. Although one of these dialects is identifiable as the "standard, prestige dialect" of the area, five large segments of the village population do not imitate this model. Instead, they preserve nonstandard dialects peculiar to their respective castes, kin and neighbourhood groupings, or conservative outlook. Lack of contact among speakers of these different dialects cannot explain most of the differences, for villagers who speak differently are often engaged in the same tasks and otherwise meet frequently. Yet only friendships among villagers of equal status seem to present effective channels for cultural transmission across dialect boundaries within the village (Gumperz, 1958). Reasons for the conservation of such linguistic diversity must rather be sought in the social structure of the community: occupants of different or lower statuses—members of separate groups or persons standing at the lower end of a ranked relationship, as employee-employer, for example—seem not to regard any higher or more standard dialect as a model appropriate for them to emulate.

One here senses a positive valuation of knowing one's reference group and keeping to it. Martin Oraons, in his recent report on cultural change among the Santals of southern Bihar (1959), notes the reluctance of certain tribesmen overtly to adopt higher Hindu ways. He explains that emulation of Hindu ways would conflict with the demands of tribal solidarity, which dictate a maintenance of distinctive ethnic features. Such social considerations surely also limit cultural transfer among the Hindu castes[2].

Probably of great effect, too, in discouraging imitation were certain aspects of village caste hierarchies. Caste ranking in existing villages of old style seems generally to depend on gestures showing actual ritual dominance or subordination in relation to other local castes. For most castes, rank is not much affected by customary attributes as such. The ancient, four-fold classification of *varna*—the Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra ways of life—represents for villagers not so much a classification of caste-ranks as a set of alternative interactional strategies emphasizing use of ritual knowledge, power, wealth or service, respectively. A caste may rise or fall many

steps of rank by use of any one of these four strategies. Generally it has little local incentive to imitate the ideal way of life of any *varna* other than that of its own identification (Marriott, 1959). Thus the majority of the meat-eating, liquor-drinking Kodagus of Coorg can gain recognition as an exalted Ksatriya-like caste merely by employing Brahmans and other castes and by stressing their own landed power; they have no need themselves to emulate Brahman vegetarianism, teetotalism, and so forth (Srinivas, 1952: 32-34, 227).

Furthermore, even when a higher caste's way of life was emulated or exaggerated by a lower caste, as sometimes happened with the same or related *varnas*, it was usually the way of life of the local high caste which was taken as the model, not the distant classical ideal. Thus a Distiller caste in the remote village studied by F. G. Bailey, wishing to identify itself with a Brahman like standing in the community, does not feel obliged to give up eating mutton, for the local Brahmans themselves eat mutton; the Distillers merely demand their mutton on the hoof and do their own butchering to insure purity (Bailey, 1957. 188–89). This example recalls once more how cultural variety and an elaborate cultural stratification have been generally favored in Indian civilization by the many intermediaries who have stood astride the tangled web of traditional communication channels.

Changing Communications : Two Phases

The changes which have overtaken Indian civilization during recent times may be compared in their effects with several centuries of momentous events in the history of European civilization—the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance, the development of printing, the establishment of parliamentary governments, the rise of nationalism, the beginnings of mass education and the mass media, and so forth. A partly parallel series of events began in India during the last century of the British period, was greatly accelerated during the past generation, and has been moving towards a climax since independence

Such changes have had great consequences for India's channels of cultural transmission. A few of the larger centers of civilization have been strengthened in their influence through growth of their own populations, and through the metropolitan concentration of industrial, financial, and political control. Central strength and government patronage have diminished the importance of the many small civilizational centers and have introduced the possibility of developing a more authoritative central version of the national civiliza-

tion. At the same time, the new means of quick and large-scale communication have been setting up more direct contacts between civilizational centres and rural masses, obviating an elaborate corps of intermediary specialists and cutting through many previous layers of cultural stratification. Where dozens of leaders and actors once played a local version of the epic drama of Ram in each of hundreds of provincial towns, a movie on the same theme now issues straight from Bombay or Madras (cf. McCormack, 1958 : 334-35, Singer, 1958 : 357-59)

These alterations in the channels of communication appear to be having large effects upon the content and organization of Indian civilization. Two phases of change may be distinguished speculatively the first affects mainly the little traditions, relating them more immediately with greater levels of tradition, often replacing parts of their content with borrowings of a more Sanskritic sort; the second affects both greater and lesser traditions, as the higher levels are themselves subjected to choice and reduction.

The first phase of change is characteristic of the later nineteenth century, although similar tendencies were to be seen in medieval devotional movements and still continue today. In this phase, indirect, specialist-mediated communication from high to low levels of culture is supplemented by more direct communication on a larger scale. Such communication may have been assisted occasionally in the past by vigorous oral propaganda, but now is facilitated by printing, rapid transportation, and other devices of the new technology. The movement of people and ideas is hastened and intensified both along existing channels in education, pilgrimage, and politics, and along new, shorter, more immediate routes.

This first phase of change is an era of big books, and of increased popular contact with the great books of ancient and medieval Hinduism. This is the juncture at which the oral texts of the Vedas were first reduced to writing. It is the time when epic, philosophic, and ritual texts were first fully published in extensive editions. This first phase thus also initiates the decline of the older oral media, including both the techniques of Vedic memorization and the many styles of oral interpretation Walking libraries begin to be replaced by stationery ones (cf. Ghurye, 1950 : 1-22).

In the second phase, characteristic of the twentieth century and acutely characteristic of the years since 1947, there arises a national demand for authoritative cultural knowledge. The need to possess a common national culture begins to dissolve the old cultural stratification. In this phase there is necessarily a condensation, and

selection of small parts out of the vast corpus of classical tradition for mass dissemination. Selection for mass participation means that the more esoteric elements tend to be neglected while other more readily intelligible and accessible, if less sacred, elements are brought to the fore as representative of the transformed great tradition of the civilisation. If the first phase is an age of large books, this second phase is an age of pamphlets.

Phases of Change in a Civilizational Center

One can readily perceive the impact of these alterations of cultural channels in one of the great centers of Hindu pilgrimage. The sacred city of Gaya may serve as an example, through the recent report by L. P. Vidyarthi (1961) For more than a millennium, Gaya in Bihar had been celebrated in Sanskrit myths and manuals as one of the foremost places for observing shraddha, the Brahmanic ritual for the worship and pacification of the spirits of departed ancestors. Even by primitive means of transportation and under conditions of political insecurity, probably close to twenty thousand pilgrims had come annually to Gaya during the closing years of the eighteenth century. For Hindus in the more distant corners of India, a pilgrimage to Gaya in each generation had been a mark of cultural aristocracy.

The advent of the Pax Britannica rapidly raised the annual volume of pilgrims to one hundred thousand persons ; later, the establishment of a major railway junction at Gaya helped to raise the number to three hundred thusand persons per year by the early twentieth century. Lavish private donations to the hereditary high priests of Gaya had nourished an elaborate local stratification of sacred specialists, shrines, and theology. But since the Gaya pilgrimage had grown to be a prominent national insituation, government patronage and control had become virtual necessities. Priests, pilgrims, and hostels were now licensed and regulated. The claims of formerly subordinate specialists were recognised by courts of law. The wealthy pilgrims' lengthy original tour to fortyfive shrines in holy Gaya was reduced for the masses of impecunious visitors to a peremptory call at a mere three or four architecturally notable points. National monuments, state parks, and the building of international associations have now begun to rise over the ruins of the sacred ground, while the volume of pilgrimage has declined sharpy, a victim of secularism and economic leveling. The great-traditional complex at Gaya thus gained at first a new and more direct relationship with a massive clientele, but was itself then radically transformed by forces inherent in its new network of communications.

Change at the Village Level ; Caste Cultures and Mobility

Recent field studies focussed on religious changes among certain low Hindu castes may serve to illustrate the distinction between the two phases as observed at the village level. Bernard Cohn (1955, 1958) shows how the Camārs of one village expressed their ambitions during the nineteenth century and until recent times through the Siva Narayani devotional sect, medieval in origin. The sect stresses the direct relation of the worshipper with certain sacred Sanskritic texts and in its rites imitates Brahmanical rituals. Ambitious Camars were also seeking to make their family customs conform more closely with what they considered to be model features of the high caste Hindu family, ignoring an opposite trend among families of the dominant and high-ranking Thakurs in their own village. A second phase of change has begun to emerge only since independence with the extension of political suffrage : the new religious focus is not on ancient models (texts and rituals) but on the person of a Camar saint, Rai Das, and on legends of his personal virtues and spiritual achievements. Whereas the earlier phase of change was Sanskritic in character and concerned with fuller adoption of the prestigious and esoteric content of high Hinduism, the second phase is popular, exoteric, greatly simplified, and politically oriented to participation in the mass society.

A parallel development may be seen in the changing religion of a group of Sweepers studied in another village by Pauline Mahar (1960). What may be identified as the first or Sanskritic phase was begun for these Sweepers by missionaries of the Arya Samaj movement of the late nineteenth century. This movement advocated a direct return to the original Vedic texts and ways of worship, and a rejection by the group of intervening levels of culture and specialization. The second phase, inspired at first by the independence movement and led by urban leaders, reinterprets the earlier cult to favour individual effort, education, thrift, and service to the nation.

Difficulties are sometimes met in trying to distinguish these two phases of change chronologically, for the two may occur together. The situation depicted by Cohn (1955, 1958) is by no means rare. Here, members of a low caste were occupied with emulating what they perceived as a high-caste model while members of the local high castes were themselves abandoning that model and looking towards a new national culture. Occasionally a single group will show both tendencies simultaneously, or a single institution will seem to show two directions of change (e. g. Mandelbaum, 1948 : 137–39, and 1955 : 244–45 , Gough, 1958 : 476). A distinction between the two phases may

nevertheless be made analytically if attention is given to differences of reference and content in the emulatory process And generally, the first phase has probably preceded the second.

The foregoing instances concerning the ambitions of contemporary low-caste groups imply that there are modest regularities in changing types of social mobility It has been pointed out above that before the occurrence of the changes under discussion caste mobility in villages was achieved more by dominance in ritual interaction than by imitation of higher ways of life , when loftier models of customary behavior were chosen, these were usually the actual usages of *higher castes in the same village.*

Changes in methods of mobility appear to parallel the phases of general civilizational change. Under the conditions of the first phase, low castes typically attempt to improve their standings by altering their customs to resemble the ideal ways of life of the caste or theoretically higher *varna* with whom they claim identity. This is that naive, direct, literal approach to upward mobility which M. N. Srinivas has called "Sanskritization" (1952 : 30). While the problem of mobility *has undoubtedly been approached in this manner by certain ambitious* castes even in earlier times, universal prerequisites of such an approach would seem to include a workable knowledge of the great traditional ideals of the upper castes and a vivid sense of the reality of a wider sphere of social reference than the village (Marriott, 1959). A wide sphere of social reference does come clearly into view for many castes in the later nineteenth century, as suggested by the parallel development of Sankritization and Westernization (Srinivas, 1956). Srinivas points out, however, that Sanskritization as a technique of mobility is older than Westernization and that the social structural conditions of its earlier occurrence are unknown. Earlier instances of Sanskritic emulation thus need to be re-examined : the present analysis leads to the hypotheses that such older instances will prove to involve castes having a broad social or political stance and an unusually close contact with representative of higher cultural levels, owing either to their possession of predominant power over a large area, or to other special circumstances.

Finally, the Sanskritic fashion of attempting upward mobility seems to be superceded, as in the examples cited, by a second, modern phase, in which the criteria of rank and the models of high caste conduct are radically altered. Overt ritual dominance and the ideals of *varna* are both rejected in favour of newly drawn, universal standards of economic and intellectual achievement.

Consequences for Cultural Content

The first shape of change described above may be regarded as a continuation of tendencies already inherent in Indian civilization. At first there need be no alteration in the cultural content of the greater levels of tradition. The basis for a broad cultural consciousness has been in existence for many centuries (Redfield and Singer, 1954 : 68-70), but participation in the higher levels of culture was not previously accessible to many. Aided by printing techniques, increased literacy, and better means of transportation, higher levels of Indian culture are brought within easier reach of favorably placed local groups throughout the society. A broader field of social, as distinguished from cultural, reference comes into existence for more villagers, while the cultural contents of that field are still represented for most persons by great traditional materials, specially the widespread Sanskritic culture borne by Brahman castes and other high castes among the "twice-born" *varnas*. Regional and local variants tend to be bypassed, as do many of the intermediary cultural specialists. But the contents of higher cultural levels remain essentially unaltered while they are imported into the village scene more readily.

The second phase of change, when masses of people come to be directly involved, sees the appearance of greater consequences for Indian Civilization , a standard authoritative version, limited in size and scope, must be selected out of the vast and varied range of the ancient whole. School text-books must be rewritten, symbols of national unification created, ways of representing the nation to the outside world established. Milton Singer has called this process "democratization" (1958 : 379). Where on an important ceremonial occasion parts of all four Vedas would once have been recited, the time limits of a large gathering now admit room for fragments of but one one Veda or none. Where many types of marriage and divorce were normally practiced in rural areas, a single narrow code of law now tends to be imposed on all (Karve, n d. · 211–13). While singers and story tellers used once to travel slowly across the land, bringing high art to each locality in the varied styles of a wide-area, many talented performers now look to the radio for an audience and a living, and thereby submit their art to a competitive process of selection, condensation, and standardization. The radio or the mass meeting many communicate cultural material more rapidly to a large audience, but the sum and variety of the material communicated by them are likely to be less.

So also with pilgrimages. The people of each small community

once maintained personal, pedestrian ties with a unique series of dozens of regional shrines, now the prestigious grand pilgrimage is accomplished by purchasing a railroad ticket for one of the "standard round tours" encompassing a large part of the whole nation (Central Railway, 1955). The mileage of each pilgrim's travels may be as great as before, but all paths are now narrowed to exclude those hundreds of once-eminent sacred places which are not conveniently close to the main railroad lines. A map of the Indian railroads may thus become a better guide to the sacred geography of the emerging India than any painstaking research into the epic wanderings of Rām and the Pāndavas

Conclusions

Whether one plots railroads and pilgrimages, the dissemination of books, the movement of personnel and ideas through the modern educational system, the organization of government and elections, or the influence of radio broadcasting, one discovers channels of cultural transmission whose radical or pyramidal form contrasts starkly with the tangled networks of medieval Indian civilization. Dominating the new channels are a few metropolitan centres, nearly identical culturally, having clear and separate jurisdictions. Dominating each urban center are a few relatively centralized institutions.

The emergence of such a new pattern of communications brings with it a newly formed Indian civilization. Two phases may be distinguished. In the first, communication is intensified, one way, from higher to lower levels of culture; Sanskritic models are taken for direct emulation, while intermediate levels and specialists are by-passed; the contents of lesser traditions are replaced by borrowings from above. In the second and succeeding phase, popular needs begin to work changes in the contents and form of the higher cultural levels themselves, selecting and condensing material suitable for mass dissemination as part of a new democratic national culture.

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NOTES

1 Revised version of the paper published in the Proceedings of the 1959 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society.

2. The old structure of rural society did not, of course, inhibit the transmission of cultural materials from village to village, or between urban and rural areas within the same caste or reference group This qualification, which was suggested to me by Prof. Bernard S Cohn, is nicely illustrated in his own study of Camār communications (Cohn 1958).

THE CHIEF CURRENTS OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.

Dr Rama Shanker Srivastava

A Background

After the dark age and the decadence of Indian Philosophy in the medieval times we have the resurgence and renaissance in the modern India. The Indian philosophy, religion and culture became stagnant and dead due to the Muslim and British rule for centuries. We may preceive two main reasons for the fall of Indian philosophy. *Firstly*, the British domination preceded by the Muslim rule ruined our culture and civilization. Political domination resulted into the mental slavery of India. The orthodox Indians, on the one side, created walls of customs, rites, ceremonies and many social distinctions in order to preserve their indigenous thought and life. Because of the insecurity and attacks from the outside, they wanted to live in the closed walls of their religion. They grew more conservative. They searched and planned for security instead of taking bold adventures in the realms of thought. The desire for preservation of the old and traditional philosophy was their first concern. If any bold spirit did ever breathe the fresh air or tried to come out, he was ostracised immediately. The Indian thinkers began simply to codify their philosophy and religion. They erected walls of segregation, distinction and exclusiveness. They preferred closed walls to fresh air. They adhered to ancient traditional philosophy and desired security rather than progress. They wanted to be secure, closed and integrated. They were afraid to go out and breathe the fresh air of the environment. If anyone tried to break up the walls, he was ruthlessly tortured. They became very narrow in outlook. Everyone desired security to progress. In a closed society and religion the rites, ceremonies, customs and the like governed most. People became less introspective and the spirit within the temples was reduced to a dead existence in the medieval age. Underneath the walls lay the dead spirit of India.

The intelligentsia class began to imitate the West in fashion, culture, speech and thought. They neglected their indigenous philosophy, morals and ways of life and imitated the West in all branches. They devoted their time to the European philosophy and literature. In order to gain high positions and service in the slave India, they

put their nerves in aping the European and especially the British. The intelligentsia class did not contribute towards their indigenous philosophy and religion, rather they desired to engraft the West on the Indian thought. Evidently this resulted in the downfall of Indian philosophy in those times. They became more devoted to the Western philosophy than to their own They thought the Western philosophy to be superior to their own.

Secondly, the Indians tried to compensate their present inferiority by singing the glory of their past Vedic and Upaniṣadic philosophy and culture They thought that the Vedas and the Upaniṣads give to us the highest systems of philosophy and that their scope and extension were so wide that there can be no development of any new thought. The highest and the loftiest ideas were contained in the scriptures and all thoughts and knowledge are contained in them How can any new thought emerge, when there is such a wide and extensive literature in Indian thought ? The Indian thinkers conceived that the Vedas and Upaniṣads are the highest, the best and the widest in the realms of philosophy. It is so vast that there is absolutely no scope for the Indian philosophy to grow in an independent line. The medieval people looked to the past for guidance. The attitude was regresive rather than progressive. The medieval age began to trace all scientific advances, like aeroplane, bomb, cars, etc., from the Vedas They conceived that all kinds and branches of knowledge viz., economics, politics, physics, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, etc., are contained in the Vedas

The renaissance of Hinduism started with the powerful thinker, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. He was a great patriot, social reformer, and political worker. He abolished many extraneous elements from Hinduism. The evils of Satipratha, child marriage, untouchability, casteism, superstition and other ceremonies were removed by him. He founded the Brahmosamāj. He stood for the open, dynamic and progressive religion For Brahmosamāj, everyone is capable of God realisation. Its religion and philosophy conceive the reality of impersonal Brahman and therefore, it has very few religious peformances. But the Brahmosamāj movement influenced only Bengal most and it could have no hold on the mind of India as a whole.

The Chief Currents of Contemporary Indian Philosophy

The present age is the age of renaissance. We are passing through the days of intense change and growth. The renaissance not only means the revival of the past but it also conveys the evolution of new thoughts and systems of philosophy. The past lives in

the present and there is the revival of the past heritage But the content and texture of philosophy differ widely. The modern age has evolved divergent and emergent principles, but its development is the natural and continuous growth and manifestation of the ancient truths. The modernists have new configuration of the essential truths of the past, and they also discard the many accepted principles of the past, which in course of ages, were thought to be untruth, unreal and dross. The new philosophy is not engrafted on the past but emerges out of it The modern Indian philosophy has in its growth, synthesis and evolution of the principles, flowering of the new concepts, morals and outlook. Whereas the basic values were in crude form, the modern Indian thought creates and manifests new values It gives new importance and significance to the ancient truths. It assimilates new values. It changes the form and texture of the materials of the past. It opens the ancient truths. It is also impossible to establish the old truths without effecting suitable changes in order to adapt them to modern conditions of scientific advancement, Western environment and social evolution. Hence inevitable and necessary changes are made in the past to suit the present. While the contemporary Indian philosophy is a native growth, it has certain basic features. The chief currents of contemporary Indian philosophy may be elucidated in the following points :

1. Positive attitude towards the world.
2. Cosmic and spiritualistic outlook.
3. Integral and synthetic view."
4. Reconciliation of theism and absolutism.
5. Monotheism or monism of Spirit and Matter.
6. Evolution of Superman or Gonstic Being
7. The new approaches to salvation.
8. Dynamism, openness and catholicity.
9. Humanistic tendencies.

1. Positive attitude towards the World :

The basic feature of the ancient Indian philosophy has been spiritual and individualistic in outlook. It does not conceive the world as Divine. The universe is either considered to be material or illusory and, therefore, not a fit abode for the individual self. The spirit of ancient Indian philosophy is ascetic. It lays much stress on the renunciation of the world.

The modern thinkers conceive that the world is real and spiritual. God has created it out of His own existence. They discard the negative attitude to the world and also asceticism. It was Swami

Vivekananda who first of all emphasised the positive aspect of the *world and laid much stress on the realistic and practical teaching of* Śankarāćārya. The positive approach to the world reaches to its zenith in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, who preferred service to salvation, action to mere teaching and a way of righteous life to *the ascetic escape from duties and refuge in the forests.* The modern thinkers refute the illusoriness and the unreality of the world advocated by the Advaitins. They develop the philosophy of humanism, bread-labour, equality, brotherhood, world-economy and world-*government. The world is not evil and self-realisation is not a* state of loneliness of the self, nor is it a condition of freedom and escape from the world. For the modern thinkers, self-realisation, is not possible by the dissociation of self with the universe. When one is dissociated from the world, one leads a life of passivity, indolence and narrowness. Then there is no hope for the salvation of mankind. If there is any spiritual evolution of man, it is a state of higher life with greater powers of consciousness and omnipotence When the individual self attains perfection, he transforms the world and changes its very structure. His life is a dedication to the service of humanity.

2. Cosmic and Spiritualistic outlook :

The thinkers to-day take the cosmic view of things. As against the individualistic character of the past, we have conviction in the cosmic evolution and salvation. An individual self can not attain liberation until the entire humanity realises it. The ancient systems of Sānkhyayoga, Nyāya, Mimāmsā and Śankar conceived that the salvation of an individual is not possible in an imperfect environment of fallen selves kept in bondage and ignorance The modern Indian thinkers conceive that the salvation of an individual is possible only when there is a spiritual environment. If the environment is evil, ignorant and base, there can never be any perfection of the individual self. The self cannot attain perfection in an imperfect environment. Unless the nature is Divine, no perfection of the individual self is possible. Hence it is conceived that the ascents of the individual self and the world go together. If nature is not sufficiently evolved, it cannot manifest, refine and perfect the individual selves. Again, *when the individual selves realise perfection,* they disperse their force and consciousness and illumine the fallen selves. For Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan, salvation is only possible when the world becomes spiritual. So long the lower prakṛti is *not transmuted into the Parā prakṛti, there can never be the salvation*

of man. Conversely, whenever there is the ascent of the individual to the greater powers of consciousness and omnipotence, the world is uplifted and spiritualised. When an individual self attains perfection, he transforms the world, and changes its very structure. The salvation of the individual is not possible till the entire mankind evolves to a high spiritual stage. Hence it is evident that the cosmic salvation or the realisation of God by the entire community of man must take place. The individual realises salvation with other selves that are in bondage today. The modern Indian philosophy is cosmic in outlook as against the individualistic outlook of the past. It denies the view that the individual self remains always individual. With the increase of spiritual powers, the self becomes unlimited in extension. It becomes infinite. Therefore it is very logical to suppose that the salvation for the individual self lies in the union with the Cosmic Spirit viz., Saccidānanda.

3. **Integral and Synthetic**

The modern Indian philosophy is integral and synthetic. It is a synthesis of the East and the West because the modern Indian philosophy has grown up in the environment of the West. While its development has been native to its soil, it has to grow in the climate of the Western civilisation and philosophy. Every modern philosopher of India has deep study of the Western philosophy, culture and religion. The man today cannot dissociate himself from the environment, and the West encircles us and deeply influences Indian thought. The great modern Indian thinkers viz., Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and K. C. Bhattacharya, had sound study of the Western religion and philosophy. These are synthetic personalities. The Western thoughts are so immensely imbibed in the minds of the Indian revivalists that they have neither narrowism nor orthodoxy with them. The ancient Indian philosophers could not take the advantage of the different systems of philosophy developed in other countries of the world. Due to the lack of communication and communion with foreign people their knowledge was narrow, seclusive, parochial and stagnant. The modern Indian philosophy is not narrow in its outlook. It conceives of cosmic salvation, world government, world brotherhood and world humanity. With the lack of the development of science in India, it was more introspective. The modern Indian thinker has his roots in the past but he also assimilates the modern Western thought in him.

The contemporary Indian philosophy is very synthetic in out-

look. It combines not only the East and the West but also the realism and idealism in intimate union. It is idealistic in the sense that all philosophers think that salvation is the ultimate end of human endeavour. It is humanistic and realistic also, because it envisages the salvation of the entire community of man. Cosmic salvation is the ultimate destiny of mankind. It is synthetic not only of the past historical systems, but it also assimilates the philosophies of the leading thinkers in the world.

4 Reconciliation of theism and absolutism ·

The most remarkable trend in modern Indian thought is found in the endeavour to reconcile both theism and absolutism. The personal God and the impersonal Brahman have very nicely been adopted in their systems. The Brahman is impersonal, pure existence, being, truth, reality and consciousness. But God is personal, creative, omnipotent, just, merciful, creator, maintainer and destroyer. God is immanent in the world and is the Supreme Person. All modern thinkers conceive and include both the personal and impersonal, dynamic and static, immanent and transcendent aspects of God in their systems of philosophy.

We observe that Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore, Ram Krishna, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, all these thinkers conceive that the supreme Reality has double aspects, the creative and the non-creative, the static and dynamic, transcendent and immanent, the impersonal and personal aspects of God. But these modern thinkers are more inclined to propound the view that God is higher to Brahman. In His supreme existence, the Absolute is comprehended. There is a tendency towards belief in theism more than the absolutism of the past. But they swindle in their systems adjusting both the aspects of God. While the emphasis is on theism and the Supreme Person as the highest reality, there are passages which lead us to think that they are absolutists. There is an attempt to reconcile Śankara and Rāmānuja in all modern philosophers. The philosophers namely, Tagore, Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo conceive Saccidānanda as the highest reality which include the impersonal Brahman.. But Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, K. C. Bhattacharya, adhere to the absolutism of Brahman. It is evident that all the modern thinkers are dominantly theistic and imperceptibly absolutistic. When we go into the details we find that in some systems, theism is inclusive of absolutism, and in few others the impersonal Brahman is more than the personal God. Whether absolutism is dominant or theism in any system, the truth is that all modern Indian thinkers try to reconcile

both absolutism and theism in their own systems of philosophy in a unique way. For Radhakrishnan and Vivekananda, Brahman is impersonal, absolute, transcendent and universal consciousness. The forms of Brahman in the shape of Kāli, Kṛṣṇa and other gods vanish with the emergence of divine consciousness in man. The samādhi-consciousness reveals that Brahman is the advaita consciousness. Radhakrishnan accepts the reality of both God and the Braman. For him the Absolute is the precosmic God. God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view. God is the projected and creative aspect of the Absolute He creates the universe, guides, maintains and evolves it. But after the cosmic salvation, God has no purpose. God lapses into the Brahman and creation is dissolved. Brahman again manifests another creative aspect, which creates another type of universe, unknown and inconceivable to the world. Radhakrishnan has very ably reconciled the duality of God and the Absolute in his synthetic and dynamic philosophy. All the modern Indian thinkers have endeavoured to reconcile and construct a comprehensive system of philosophy inclusive of God and the Absolute in their systems of philosophy.

5. Monotheism or monism of Spirit and Matter

The dominant feature of recent Indian philosophy is this that it has demolished the fundamental dualism of Matter and Spirit. Modern Indian philosophy is essentially monotheistic and monistic. Matter is Brahman, observes the great Indian sage, Sri Aurobindo. Matter is the lowest manifestation of God or is God. From the superficial point of view the duality between Spirit and Matter disappears when we conceive that the manifestation of the Spirit has different grades. Spirit is God. It is the native or explicit reality of God, whereas Matter is the implicit, latent and involved aspect of God. There are degrees of manifestation between Matter and Spirit. We have between them the principles of life, soul, mind, higher mind, intuition, overmind, supermind and other divine grades of consciousness and reality from Supermind to Saccidānanda Matter evolves into life, life into mind, mind into higher grades of consciousness, and finally into the complete and explicit existence of Spirit in its full manifestation. The duality between Spirit and Matter is only apparent. The modern thinkers do not endeavour to establish monism by thinking the hierarchical grades of reality as unreal. The true monism is not devoid of all duality and manyness. The realities in the universe belong to hierarchical grades. Those who dismiss matter life and mind as illusory or mere dreams have not the proper insight

into the nature of reality. The realities of the universe are the revealed aspects or modes of God. The manyness or modes of God are real. The realities are similar to God as well as different. There is, however, unity in diversity. While all the realities are made of the divine substance, they have different modes and degrees of Divine expression.

6. Evolution of Supermen or Gnostic Beings :

The modern Indian thinkers conceive the emergence of Superman or Gnostic being in course of cosmic evolution. For them man is not the highest product of cosmic evolution. The evolution of superman or gnostic beings is the next higher emergence that has yet to take place. Man is not the highest, most perfect and ultimate end of cosmic evolution. The grades of consciousness and power, have yet to be embodied in some higher beings. Sri Aurobindo and Dr Iqbal conceive that man will in course of time evolve into Supermen. The animal has evolved into man and the man is to be transformed into the Superman Man is not the end of evolution. The cult of supermen is gaining belief today. Henri Bergson conceives that in course of evolution, many mystic beings will emerge and form a society. Sri Aurobindo also conceives that the Supermen with greater powers of consciousness and will, must emerge in the world soon. Our mind is limited, ignorant, and erroneous. The intuition comes to us momentarily and passes away. But in the Supermen, the Supramental consciousness will be the permanent consciousness in us. The spiritual and supramental grades of consciousness are much higher than the mental consciousness. The continuous and ceaseless evolution of man will transform him into the spiritual and supramental being.

7. The new approaches to Salvation :

The conception of salvation has taken altogether a different turn. The modern thinkers conceive that salvation is the rebirth of the soul in the individual. The individual is so spiritually transformed, that he becomes spiritualised and divinised. To realise salvation is to be God or Krsna having divine body, life and mind. Such gnostic beings have the highest powers of consciousness. The soul finds its union with the consciouness of nature. Salvation does not mean today the cessation of rebirth or freedom from the world of nature. Such supramental beings take birth and rebirth in order to purify the world and make it divine. Salvation means the realisation in us of greater powers of consciousness, omniscience and omnipotence. They yield more powers of consciousness and ceaselessly endeavour for transform-

ing the cosmos. The realised souls do not merge into the universal Brahman in order to lose their individuality in it but get transformed into the divine life of Saccidānanda. The Supreme realisation has not yet been achieved to humanity. There are, again, other thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore, who think that salvation is the realisation of constant communion, presence and enjoyment of the munificence of God. Salvation lies in bondage and not in freedom. Tagore wants to enjoy the vision of God. The realised man enjoys in play with Him. One likes to enjoy sugar and not to become sugar Similarly, the realised individual receives the greatest happiness and blessedness in the pursuit of transforming the lower material nature into the Divine Supernature.

The salvation of an individual lies not in feedom, liberation or other worldly existence. It is not a state of escape from the world. It is a condition of higher birth, when man is reborn anew and takes a new supremental life, body, consciousness and energy. The highest realisation of universal consciousness, will, energy and gnostic life is called salvation.

Though the conception of salvation vastly differs in modern Indian thinkers, yet they all conceive that this is a stage of highest realisation of the individual self which makes him omniscient and omnipotent. They establish constant communion with God and are ever engaged in the spiritualisation of the world. They are immortal by their conduct and serve as example to others. Thus they bring about spiritual transformation in nature. While for Rabindranath Tagore, salvation means the purified state of the individual self in constant communion with God, for Mahatma Gandhi it is a state of God realisation in which man is completely dedicated to the service of the world, and for Sri Aurobindo, it is a spiritual rebirth into the supramental. We observe that all modern Indian thinkers are of the view that the perfected souls take higher births and serve as leaders of society in moral, ideal and spiritual pursuits The supermen take births and rebirths for the good of the world. They transform the world and ceaselessly spiritualise it. Sri Aurobindo conceives that the gnostic consciousness is all pervasive. It is connected with the earth consciousness, and thereby shapes and spiritualises the universe. The realised souls according to Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. S. M. Iqbal, do active service to humanity and endeavour to lift up the masses and make them sublime, ideal and spiritual.

8. Dynamism, Openness and Catholicity :

The modern Indian philosophers are very liberal and dynamic in outlook. They do not believe in credal or sectarian religion, and teach the gospel of universal religion comprising the best of all religions. Ramkrishna–Parmahansa, Tagore, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan visualise the advent of a catholic religion, which is open dynamic, universal and all embracing. Thus Mahatma Gandhi says "My religion is Hinduism which for me, is religion of humanity and includes the best of all the religions known to me" (Contemporary Indian philosophy, 2nd Edition, p. 21). Ramkrishna Parmahansa emphatically says that all religions are true and they all serve as different pathways to the realisation of God. The same truth runs in the heart of all religions. There is essential unity in all religions and yet there is diversity. While the renascent leaders have faith in the truth of all religions, they all hold, that one particular religion should not be engrafted on another religion. Each religion has its value and serves society in a particular manner. The solace and satisfaction can be derived from religions only when it grows on indigenous lines. There should be growth in all religions, which should flower independently on their own pattern. It will be harmful to reduce all religions to a colourless form of one particular religion.

In the history of India, it is for the first time that Swami Vivekananda, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Mahatma Gandhi called on the Indian masses to break their narrowness and lead the life of religion based on their religious experience. The modern Indian thinkers preach that the soul of a religion is different from its body. The myths, castes, rites constitute the body of the religion which is perishable. The spirit of Indian religion is that of an open religion based on the intuitive experiences of God. A religious man is a social reformer, a true Karmayogin like Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Humanistic tendencies :

The renaissance in India has given immense emphasis to the life on earth and well-being of society. They lay more stress upon the values of life and the realisation through social service, feeling of brotherhood and righteous action. We can realise our salvation only by performing our duties. The revival of the Gītā's teaching of selfless action, dedicated service and fight against evil, ignorance, poverty and misery has resulted in the release of a large fund of religious energy for social work in the present times.

The modern Indian thinkers are excessively traditional. They

have their roots in the past and they hardly deviate much from the ancient systems. *All the truths and values inculcated by the contemporary thinkers are traceable to one or the other systems.* Being essentially synthetic in outlook, and given too much to inheritance, there is hardly a system in modern Indian thought which carves out new paths and develops new channel of thought. This has led many scholars to the view that there is no modern Indian philosophy as such. These thinkers reinstate the ancient truths and values and they can hardly be called creative philosophers. The philosophy of recent thinkers is more or less a synthesis of different systems. But there is undoubtedly the difference in interpretations, systematisations and above all in the angles of synthesis which are of immense value. Amongst the great modern mystic thinkers, Sir Aurobindo may be called as the most exalted thinker who has built up an integral advaitism. There is the meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy which also opens up new lines of thinking

The basic elements of modern Indian thought are contained in its positive outlook, cosmic view, integralism, reconciliation of theism and absolutism, monism of Spirit and Matter, emergence of gnostic beings or supermen, new approaches to salvation, dynamism, openness and humanism. These are the chief characteristics of modern Indian philosophy propounded by the pioneers of contemporary Indian thought. The impact of the West, the scientific advancement and human values mould the mind of Indian renaissance thinkers. We also observe that Indian renaissance movement is still in infancy. The modern Indian philosophy is yet to grow to maturity and if it has to regain its prestige today in the philsosophical world, it has to be creative, revolutionary and progressive in the realms of metaphysics and social philosophy.

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THINKING ABOUT THE HINDU WAY OF LIFE*

Dr. A. Aiyappan

Introduction :

I am a Hindu and when I talk of Hinduism and Indian faiths allied to Hinduism, it is extremely difficult to avoid getting ethnocentric. I have some advantage over most other Indians in an effort to look objectively at India ; this advantage I owe to my training in anthropology and to my familiarity with a wide range of faiths from the simplest to the most complex. Some of you may be curious about my own personal beliefs and convictions, so I had better confess that I have acquired them the hard way, beginning as a rationalist, and then rediscovering for myself, in a lay fashion, the profundity of Hindu religious thought by personal contact with men and women near the sources of religious light. The understanding of one's own religion is difficult for most of us whether we are of the east or of the west, Hindu or Christain or Moslem. The difficulty becomes almost insuperable when you are trying to understand the faiths of other people. Those of you who have tried to translate poetry would know very well how difficult it is to render a set of linguistic symbols correctly and intelligently into another language. To translate the religious thought of the Hindus is a difficult job, due to my own inadequate religious experience, due to the difficulty of the language employed and thirdly to our ethnocentrism, yours going against mine in spite of our best efforts to counteract its influence.

How Misunderstanding Arises :

Misunderstanding thrives when there are lacking two essentials of understanding, namely, sympathy and empathy. If this impediment is added to the natural difficulty of understanding the religious experience of people with strange cultural background, the situation becomes intolerable to men of goodwill. India has been lucky in having such great European and American admirers of her religion and culture as Max Müller, Romain Rolland, Bloomfield and Emerson, but a good number of the lesser fry have been quite unable

* *Text of a talk delivered at Rochester, New York State, during the India Week Celebration at the Rochester University. The other speaker was ambassador Mr. G. L. Mehta. Rochester is the headquarters of the Kodak Company ; about a third of the population of the city is employed by this very big concern.*

to understand her. The most recent example I have come across is an American diplomat's condemnation of Indians as worshippers of the phallus. This diplomat must have got his information second-hand from missionary writers of the eighteenth or the seventeenth century, for Christian missionaries of the present day know their field better. By mis-interpreting a Hindu religious symbol to his readers all the world over, this person not only misleads them but also does a grievous wrong to millions of Indians. He tries to denigrate Hindus as a set of depraved people who have not outgrown barbarism. If he had taken the trouble to ask any Hindu, he would have got the straight and honest explanation that the stone cylinders or *lingas* installed in the temples of Siva do not have any association with sex in the minds of the devout men and women who venerate them as the symbol of the third person of the Hindu Trinity. What these religious representations, images, rituals, etc., mean and do to the people concerned is the subject that interests the unprejudiced observer who, I am sure, will find his task as interesting as a voyage of exploration. I have found it interesting myself.

Try to imagine the pain you would be inflicting on a devout Roman Catholic if you were superciliously to refer to him as a worshipper of blood and wine or of crossed battens of wood.

An American friend of mine, who was Professor of Sociology in the Colombo University, used to offer a coconut to the Hindu god Ganesa in the same manner as his Hindu companions, and the amount of good will this simple act of his produced was, believe it or not, immense.

I would therefore ask for your sympathetic understanding, for in talking about religion, unless one is assured of it, the sharing of religious experience and awe becomes impossible.

India Not Hyper-Religious

In an article of his published a few years ago in the Journal *Visvabharati* of poet Tagore's University in Bengal, Professor J.B S. Haldane tried to demonstrate that England was a more religious-minded country than India. His argument was that for the practice of such simple virtues as charity, honesty, etc., and for the capacity to stand up and fight for one's principles and convictions, a certain optimum standard of living and security was essential. In the absence of these things, most Indians, according to Haldane, are 'condemned to a vegetative existence. Though I cannot accept his reasoning, yet the statement serves as a corrective to the common belief that India is a hyper-religious country. In schools and colleges,

in political groups and parliaments, in towns and villages of India, it is possible to see as much irreligion as in any other country. The state of disrepair of several of our temples gives clear proof of the decreasing support religious institutions are able to enlist nowadays. For political and other reasons, the Government of India, at present seems to me to be one of the most secular of governments. My knowledge of the religious climate of the United States in very slight, but I get the impression that this country is far more religious than most outsiders suppose it to be. In the small town of Ithaca*, I was surprised to find a dozen churches most of them well supported and used by the local communities. On Sundays I spend a great deal of my time listening to talks on religion, the fervour of some of which I have found most impressive. This seems to me to be a land of people who seek salvation through hard work—*Karma Yoga*, as Hindus call it.

Experiment in Life of the Spirit in India—Yoga

Life in God is a trait shared by all mankind; India does not have more of it than other nations of the world. Interesting experiments in dealing with the supernatural have been carried out by men all through the centuries, all over the world. The mystic spiritual exercise known under the generic name Yoga with its elaborate introspective psychology and philosophy is perhaps the most significant contribution which India has made to our common religious heritage. I was not interested, for a long time, even in reading about these esoteric practices, because, as a rationalist, I had prejudged them as meaningless mental and physical acrobatics. But a few years ago something happened which compelled me to change my attitude. In my home town in India I came across a man who demonstrated to the complete satisfaction of medical men that the autonomous nervous system which, we are taught in physiology classes, cannot be brought under voluntary control, *could* be controlled by the will of the practitioner of yoga. Body control is one of the minor branches of yoga, but it shows the mood and achievements of the ancient Hindu experimentalists in the field of human physiology. They observed the lowered rate of heart beat, etc., in hibernating animals. If frogs and snails could do it, they thought, it should be possible for man also by practice to regulate the functioning of his heart and lungs. They succeeded in developing a system of exercises which gave them a great deal of control over the body. Physical exercises based on

*Ithaca is a small university town. I was visiting professor of social anthropology, at Cornell University in Ithaca during 1953-54.

Hatha Yoga which have the advantage that they do not strain the heart are being popularised in India and I am glad that they are getting known in the United States too.

Exercises of a psychological character to amplify the powers of the mind must have been the next step; and the pioneers in this line were probably the practical philosophers and seers of India, who were not satisfied with the adumbration of theories, but felt called upon, like the experimental scientist of the present day, to test the validity of their theories in the laboratory of life and often they became their own guinea pigs The first great work on yogic spiritual exercises is the sage Patanjali's *Yogasutra* of about the second century B C., considered by the most competent occidental philosophers as one of the clearest and most astounding works of philosophical prose in the world.

What is the nature of the "I", or the "Ego", is the question which Patanjali seeks to answer And the answer can be experienced, not heard or read, only when all the spontaneous activities of the mindstuff have been intentionally stopped

Mind, according to the science of yoga, is in constant flux, transforming itself into the shape of all the subjects of which it becomes aware. There are five great obstacles to the complete stilling of the mind, which might be summed up as the conscious human personality and the unconscious biological drives that support the personality structure. The human being is afraid of the dissolution of the strands of its individualisation, but the revelation of the true Self can take place only after such a dissolution. In seven stages of self discipline, withdrawal of the senses, contemplation and final trance, the yogi realizes that the true self is the "still witness", which is unattached to the mental processes The true "I" is thus isolated, a process which is said to give heavenly joy to the fortunate person who effects this dissolution.

Yoga is an attempt to enthrone God in your heart to the complete exclusion of everything else; or, in lay language, it is the answer to the prayer for the capacity to see yourself as objectively as possible. Criticism has been made against yoga that it is a kind of auto-intoxication. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I have derived considerable benefit not directly, but indirectly from some of the great yogis of modern India, integrated men shedding light and radiance everywhere, Sri Aurobindo of Pondicherry, Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai near Madras, and Sri Narayana of Travancore, who were in our midst until recently, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Vivekananda of Bengal, who flourished in the second half of

the nineteenth century, were modern yogis to whom all Indians owe a great deal. They were practical mystics, but also most effective leaders of men.

Yoga in India is very ancient ; if the interpretation of the significance of some of the seals and figurines of the Indus Valley civilization is correct, then the practice of yoga has a history of at least, 5,000 years. Whatever be its antiquity, yoga of the variety I have described could not have been anything but esoteric and possible of attainment by a very limited number of people. The common people found, in the numerous temples of India, the means for spiritual discipline, solace and security. In some of the shrines of the backward sections of the people, animal sacrifices, and the propitiation of the spirits, personifying disease and pestilence, are in vogue, but the Brahmins and others practising more refined forms of worship seldom troubled themselves about stopping such practices, for Indians have generally been very tolerant. In fact, some Indian sects such as the Jains consider it a sin to try to convert other people to their faith ; it is regarded a form of violence.

Temples directed to yogic ends

A temple houses the symbolic or anthropomorphic representation of a god or goddess Though the representation by itself becomes a sacred object after the series of rites to invest it with "life", there is no confusion in the mind of any worshipper about the image being a mere symbol, so that the expression "image worship" or idolatry applied to the Hindus is incorrect. The object of worship is the deity represented by the symbol. The god worshipped in the temple is a highly humanized god, for abstract concepts are beyond the powers of comprehension of most of us. The grandest temples of India are in Southern India where they are referred to as the "palace" of such and such a god. In fact the rituals of these temples follow the daily and seasonal routines of the court of the Hindu monarchs. Early in the morning the god-king is roused from his sleep by the strains of soft music and the devotional songs of devotees some of whom reach the temple by 3 a. m. The image is bathed and dressed and decorated and various offerings are placed before it, including flowers, incense, lighted lamps, and food. The sweet scent of the incense fills the air, the sound of the bells fills the ear, and the worshippers now view the image through dozens of little flickering lights and offer their worship. Though I am not a temple-goer myself, I cannot deny that the whole atmosphere of the temple at the time of the public worship has an elevating character which in the Cristian world people experience at the time of the Holy Mass.

Both in the rituals of the temple and in domestic worship, various psychological and mechanical devices to imprint on the mind and even on the body of the worshipper the idea and presence of the deity are employed. The devotee purifies his body and mind and invokes the presence of the god in the lotus of his heart. Ritual formulae with sound symbols resembling, when reduced to writing, some kind of spiritual algebra, gesture language, geometrical representations of the deity and religious dances are included in the devotional paraphernalia. The object of all these is to bridge the seeming distance between the worshipper and his god, and when this is accomplished the two no longer are separate. The worshipper becomes a liberated man by the grace of his god; he reaches the same goal which the yogi reached by following a more troublesome course.

Religious Universalism of India :

Religion is a matter of insight and intuition, and it is difficult for me to agree with some of my fellow anthropologists who talk about religion evolving. In spite of the seeming outward differences in form and symbols, the quality and flavor of all religions are, at their source, the same. This is the belief which Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi have been advocating and which most Indians do not have any difficulty in subscribing to. Ramakrishna, the priest yogi of a temple in Bengal saw visions of Christ and Mohammed just as he saw visions of Krishna and the Great Mother Kali whose priest he was. In the dozens of his most wonderful parables he taught his vast body of disciples that the differences which we see in religious practices are the result of the differences in the cultural backgroud of the people. They are not the result of any qualitative difference in religious insight.

Before coming out to this country, I used to have the impression that domestic life in the United States would be different from ours. I do not know how I got this impression, but that is the stereotype current in India. After some familiarity with the life of the American men and women at Cornell, I find that parental affection, conjugal love, friendship, *etc.*, function with the same primeval charm (shall I say universal charm ?) here as in India, and the basic similarity overshadows the differences in secondary details. We see differences more readily than similarities; we have to look for similarities. What is true of domestic life should, I feel, be true of religious life also, if we examine the problem with the attention it deserves.

One of our teachers, Sri Narayana of Travancore, used to compare the dull men, who cannot see the beauty or truth of faiths

other than their own, to the six blind men of Hindustan who tried to describe the elephant. They see reality in bits, but do not see the whole of it. Thanks to the influence of our great teachers, the capacity to see the other man's point of view in religious matters is growing among the men and women of India, which is indeed something most desirable

India is on the whole a conservative country where changes are difficult to initiate and also to accelerate. For example, Vedic customs, rituals, and the Indo-Aryan tongue used about 4,000 years ago survive unchanged as living fossils. New forces are now at work and the pace of change seems to be unbelievably great there at the present moment. We hope that the good things of the spirit will not be swept away by the silent revolution which India now is witnessing in many spheres of life.

Both Hindus and Buddhists believe in new avatars, or incarnations. Our great philosopher Sri Aurobindo believes that men with superconciousness would evolve and set things right in this confused world. So we are full of hope about the future of mankind and this hope is rooted in the belief that our universe is God-governed.

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HINDU SECTS AND FOOD PATTERNS IN NORTH INDIA[1]

K. N. Sharma

I

In recent anthropological literature on India one can find two converging trends of village and caste studies in prominence. An under current of these studies has been the study of food patterns of the people. Rural studies have offered ample opportunities to anthropologists to observe the social system of Indian villages in general and caste system in particular. Food patterns have been studied with a view to analyse inter-caste and intra-caste commensal relations, status evaluation and mobility of caste groups within the caste system from one status level to another.

Thurston found two main divisions of Brahmans in India of which the southern Panch Dravidas are pure vegetarians, whereas the Panch Gaudas need not abstain from meat and fish, though some, who live among Panch Dravidas, do so (1907-9 : 268, Vol 1) Srinivas says that today the Brahmans are, by and large, vegetarians except the Saraswat, Kashmiri and Bengali Brahmans who are non-vegetarians (1956 : 74) and that a low caste is able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, by sanskritising its ritual and pantheon (1952 : 30). Stevenson says that of the concomitant beliefs of the population concept some—like those concerning human emissions—are rooted in the Sanskrit scriptures (though they may antedate them), and are therefore current throughout India. Others, for example, those concerning the propriety of eating venison or fish (Hutton 1946 : 67) are subject to local variation. There is also a marked decline in the intensity of beliefs about population from South to North India. These regional variations, however, are of degree rather than of kind, and they do not affect the general framework of the caste status system, which has a considerable morphological uniformity throughout India (1954 : 48). About the prevalence of non-vegetarian food in some areas Stevenson further says : The local ritual status depends *not only upon Indiawide beliefs, but also on variable local beliefs* concerning pollution which carry most weight in their locality (Hutton 1946 : 67, 98). For example, the members of a high caste status group, who eat venison, would not thereby lose relative local ritual status (Lacey 1933 : 33) if they lived in juxtaposition with a

higher status group of Rajputs who eat the meat of wild boars (Hutton 1946 : 67), or with a group of Brahmans (Ghurye 1932 26 ; Srinivas 1952 28) who eat meat.

If these statements are read together, the following line of reasoning emerges :

(*i*) Brahmans are vegetarians and only exceptionally non-vegetarians.

(*ii*) South[2] and North and other regional variations are of degree rather than of kind and they do not affect the general framework of Indian caste status system, though variable local beliefs have relevance in their localities.

(*iii*) The general caste status system is dependent on vegetarianism and other criteria of the Pollution concept ; The local variations in it are insignificant. And,

(*iv*) therefore, a low caste is able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the caste hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism and by sanskritising its rituals and pantheon.

(*v*) This general framework of caste system is found throughout India, because the beliefs are rooted in the Sanskrit scriptures.

These generalisations like all other generalisations about Indian Social system overlook the significant variations. It cannot be safely assumed that the value of vegetarianism is rooted in the Sanskrit scriptures and, therefore, it is prevalent throughout India. Nor can it be said, without reservations, that this value is part of caste system as such and local variations are insignificant. After going through the above statements one is left wondering why and how these local variations are persisting.

In this paper an effort has been made to explain the general prevalence of the value of vegetarianism and 'variable local, value of non-vegetarianism. No effort, however, has been made to examine its influence either on status evaluation or caste mobility. The data offered in support of the statements are from North India and therefore, the statements have a direct relevance to North India only, though they may be equally valid for South India. Before the presentation of data and their analysis, it is necessary to give a brief introduction to the four important Hindu sects viz ; Vishnuism, Shivism, Shaktism and Smartism, as they have played a significant role in establishing socio-religious values regarding vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism.

II

Vishnuism,[3] Shivism, Shaktism and Smartism

In the Rigveda we find reference to Vishnu but as a diety he is of no special eminence. After the Vedic age he becomes the undisputed Lord of the Universe for his worshippers. Today, the worship of Vishnu, especially in North India, is conspicuous by its absence Two most important incarnations of Vishnu—Ram and Krishna—were born in U. P. and are more popular than Vishnu himself. But Vishnuism flourished exceedingly in the South, where it gave rise to a series of sub-sects Nearly all of them reject sacrifice and make personal devotion the basis of salvation. All of them stress ceremonial purity of food as well. Even in the category of vegetarian food the Vaishnavas have two categories of prescribed and prohibited food. For example, potatoes, onions, garlic and other roots, chillies etc are prohibited to a Vaishnava Such food cannot be offered to deities

In Northern India the Shaivas are less distinct as a body than in South India. However, in the South the real division is not between the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu but between Smartas (those who follow the ancient ritual observances) and those who seek for salvation by devotion. Another school of Shivaite philosophy flourished in Kashmir from the Ninth century and Kashmiri Brahmans still follow it. In the Kashmiri school of Shivaite philosophy devotional element is non-existent. In the South, however, this aspect is as prominent in Shivism as it is in Vishnuism. The Southern devotional Shaivas are vegetarians, while the Kashmiri Shaivas are non-vegetarians.

Shaktism flourished in North-East India with its chief sanctuary at Kamakhya in Assam. It has spread to other parts of North India but its Tantric aspects are not so prominent in North-West India as in the North-East. One of the most important doctrines of Shaktism is Tantric one, that passion can be destroyed and exhausted by passion. Panch Tattva or Five 'Makars' or Five M's are foremost features of Tantrism. These five M's are : wine (Madya), meat (Mansa), fish (Matsya), holy finger gestures (Mudra) and copulation (Maithuna). The devotional aspect of religion cannot exist along with these doctrines which encourage both eating of certain kinds of non-vegetarian food and wine.

The fourth sampradaya is those of Smartas. Smartas, etymologically, are followers of the behaviour pattern prescribed by Smritis. So far as the worship of deities is concerned they worship all the five im-

portant deities, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh and Shakti or Mother Goddess Smartas are without exception vegetarians. In the South they are in prominence In the North their number is small and they are, therefore, less distinct.

Thus we see that preservation of life is a cardinal value in Vishnuism. Shivism is silent in this respect. Shaktism, however, encourages animal sacrifice. Eliot says with the Vishnuism it (non-violence) is an article of faith, nor do the worshippers of Shiva usually propitiate him with animal sacrifice, though these are offered by Shaktas and also by the small class of Brahmans, who still preserve the vedic ritual (1954 171 Vol. II).

Each one of these sects emphasizes the worship of a specific type or class of deities. It is necessary as part of the rituals connected with the worship of a particular deity to offer some kind of food. This offering is usually called as 'Bhoga'. After the symbolic 'eating' by the deity the priest and the devout take the food so offered as 'Prasad' (favour of god). To the various incarnations of Vishnu e.g. Krishna and Ram, only vegetarian food can be offered. In the traditional Shaktism of the North-Eastern variety Mother Goddess is always offered non-vegetarian food. There are only three kinds of animals which are offered to her i.e. fish, goat and occasionally buffalo. Even in Kashmir the Shivaites never offer non-vegetarian food to Shiva but they do offer meat to Bhairavas, and lesser Rudras, such as Vatak, associated with Shiva (Madan : T N., personal communication). Thus Shiva himself may be treated as a Vegetarian God ; his associates are, however, non-vegetarians also in the eyes of some of his devouts.

It is to be noted that these sects are non-church type or in other words there is no religious bureaucracy controlling the behaviour of the followers of these sects. This situation maximises the possibilities of religious deviance (Levy, M.J. : 1952 : 373). This deviance can be observed in the behaviour of the followers of these sects. One can observe the Shivaites worshipping Vishnu and Mother Goddess in some form or the other, Vaishnavas worshipping deities of the other two sects and so on. However, there are certain sects of Vishnuism which do not allow the worship of any other deity except Krishna. These deviations have been traced at the group level. On individual level also deviation occurs, because the non-church type religions may emphasise individual religious responsibility ; among the Hindus it is so. The result is that even in the same family one member may become a complete Vaishnava, leaving non-vegetarian food altogether, while others may continue to be Shaktists.

One can observe two major types of deviances First, in which a person remains a Shakta, Vaishnava or Shaiva according to the orientation of his family, but also worships the deities of other sects. This kind of deviance is found in many groups of North India. The Shaktas of North-Eastern India are the best examples of this kind of deviance Most of them also worship Krishna The prominent exceptions are the followers of Ramanuja sect These Vaishnavas worship only the incarnations of Vishnu; they do not worship any other deity Some unorthodox Vaishnavas and Smartas worship Shakti or Mother Goddess. The difference between the Shaktas worshipping Krishna and Vaishnavas and Smartas worshipping Shakti is that the former are normally non-vegetarians and when they worship Krishna or observe the fasts and festivals associated with Vishnuism they are vegetarians; the latter are always vegetarians. They offer only vegetarian food to the Mother Goddess This difference can be explained by the fact that offering of vegetarian food to Krishna by the Shaktas is not against Shaktism, while offering of non-vegetarian food to Mother Goddess by Vaishnavas is against the tenets of Vishnuism and their behaviours have been patterned by Shaktism and Vishnuism respectively.

Secondly, one may renounce one's own sect altogether by initiation into another sect or by exigencies of natural circumstances renunciation may be presumed. This kind of variation is found among Shaktas One may be initiated by a Guru (preceptor) of a Vaishnava sect into Vishnuism. One of the important symbols of this initiation is a 'Kanthi' (a string of Tulsi beads) After such an initiation one has to renounce non-vegetarian food for all times to come. In the case of woman renunciation of Shaktism is presumed at the time of the death of her husband. A Bengali widow is not allowed to eat the non-vegetarian food at all.

In the light of the above analysis of the four sects, as they affect the behaviour of their followers in relation to the eating of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food and worshipping of deities, we can draw the following categories :—

SECT CATEGORIES	*MAJOR DEITIES WORSHIPPED*	*KIND OF FOOD*
1. Pure Shaktas	Shakti (Goddess Mother)	Non-vegetarian
2. Unorthodox Shaktas	Mainly Krishna besides Shakti	Normally non-vegetarian, vegetarian when Vaishnava fasts and festivals are observed.

SECT CATEGORIES	*MAJOR DEITIES WORSHIPPED*	*KIND OF FOOD*
3. Non-Shaktas	Shakti & Krishna	Vegetarian.
4 Converted Vaishnavas	Mainly Krishna	Vegetarian.
5. Pure Vaishnavas	Ram or Krishna or both	Vegetarian.
6. Unorthodox Vaishnavas	Also worship Shiva, Shakti and others	Vegetarian.
7. Shaivas (devotional)	Shiva	Vegetarian.
8. Shaiva-Shaktas	Shiva, Shakti, Krishna, etc.	Normally non-vegetarian, but vegetarian when observe Vaishnava fasts and festivals.
9. Smartas	Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva Shakti and Ganesh	Vegetarian.

III

Broadly speaking Northern India may be divided into three regions from the point of view of the spread of these sects. In the first 4 region may be included Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In this region we find both Shaktism and Vishnuism, but the pre-eminence of Shaktism is apparent. Shivism also prevails, but it has been overshadowed by the other two sects. The evidence in support of the above statement is the importance of 'Durga' (Mother Goddess) in the socio-religious life of the people of this region. 'Durga Puja' (worship of Mother Goddess which falls in Sep-October) is the most important festival in this region. To Durga the devouts offer goats and occasionally buffaloes. In the famous temple of Kali in Calcutta the ritual sacrifice is presided over by Brahman priests and the Brahmans are not prohibited from sacrificing the animals themselves. Both the priests and the devotus partake of the sacrifice as 'Prasad' after the symbolic eating by 'Kali' (Mother Goddess) In this region many devouts of Kali are worshippers of Krishna also. On the day of Janmastami (the birthday of Krishna) such Shaktas are completely vegetarians, because Krishna or as a matter of fact both the most important incarnations of Vishnu—Ram and Krishna—are vegetarians. They fall in our first two categories respectively.

Besides Shaktists two other categories of people are also found in this region—converted Vaishnavas and non-Shaktas (for the want of

a better term I have used this term). There is an initiation rite of Vaishnavas, known as 'Diksha'. The Vaishnava Gurus perform this initiation rite. When a person has been initiated into Vishnuism, he renounces Shaktism and then non-vegetarian food is tabooed to him. Such Vaishnavas never eat meat or fish. In the categories of non-Shaktas are included the widows. As soon as a married woman becomes widow she loses her rights to take non-vegetarian food. She may be initiated into Vishnuism and thereby she becomes a Vaishnava; even otherwise she does not remain a Shakta in the strict sense of the term. *They fall in the third and fourth categories respectively.*

In Bihar and Orissa both Vaishnava and Shakta ritual-complexes prevail. At Gaya these two complexes are represented by two famous temples of Narayan Pad and Durga. The priests and worshippers of Durga are non-vegetarians and the priests and worshippers of Narayan Pad are completely vegetarians. Moreover, the Marwaris coming from Rajasthan and living in Bihar have made Durga a Vaishnava (vegetarian) deity because they are basically Vaishnavas They have adopted Durga because they have been influenced by Shaktism prevalent in this region. Their Durga is a 'Vaishnava Durga'. This is evidenced by the fact that the temples of Durga constructed by them in Giridi and other places in Bihar are called as 'Vaishnava Mandas'. In these temples, no sacrifice is offered to her The effect *of these conflicting values has been that sometimes in the same family* some persons are Vaishnavas and vegetarians and some persons continue to be Shaktas and non-vegetarians. (Sinha D. N., Vidyarthi L. P. : personal communication). Such Vaishnavas are converted Vaishnavas and fall in our fourth category.

The second 5 region consists of U. P (excluding the Himalayan hills), M. P., Delhi, The Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujrat and Maharastra states. In this region Vishnuism is the most dominant sect, probably due to the factor that Ayodhya and Mathura, the birth places of Ram and Krishna respectively are in U. P. and they are the centres of *several sects connected with either Ram or Krishna. The important* Brahman castes or Jatis of this region are Saryupari, Kanyakubja, Sanadhya, Gauda, Malviya and Saraswat. Among Saryuparis and Kanyakubjas there are several important groups of families which are traditionally non-vegetarians. Among Saryuparis 'Bheri' and 'Bakarua' ('Bheda' means sheep and 'Bakra' means goat) clans are non-vegetarians and they are in the highest status group of Saryupari Brahmans. Among Kanyakubja Brahmans also there are several Gotra-groups which are traditionally non-vegetarians and several of them are members of the highest status group of Kanyakubja Brahmans *i. e.* twenty

Biswas (Sharma, b. 1956 : 18–28). One of the most important gotras is Katyayan (the worshippers of Katyayani Mother Goddess). In this group on the occasion of Mundan (the first hair-cutting ceremony) a goat is offered to Mother Goddess. The relations of the host gathered on this occasion partake of the meat of the sacrificed goat. In Gamras village all Kanyakubja Brahman families belong to middle (Panchadar) and the lowest (Dhakar) status groups and a majority of them are non-vegetarians. (Sharma, a. 1956 : 181). In both of these caste groups hypergamy is prevalent, with the result that vegetarian groups enjoying lower status offer their daughters in marriage to these non-vegetarian groups which enjoy highest status in the caste (Sharma, a. 1956 : 18–28). These Shaktist–non-vegetarian families fall in the second category. There are many families which are either pure Vaishnavas (category 5) or unorthodox Vaishnavas, who also worship Shiva *etc.* (category 6) There are some families, specially among Kanyakubja and Saryupari castes, which are Shaivas of non devotional type (category 8). Gauda, Sanadhya, Malviya and Saraswata Brahmans are traditionally vegetarians. There is no group in these castes which is traditionally non-vegetarian. So is the case with the Brahmans of Gujrat and Maharastra. These Brahmans are either pure Vaishnavas or unorthodox Vaishnavas, worshipping Shiva, Durga *etc.* Thus they fall either in the fifth or sixth category.

In the third region are included Jammu and Kashmir and the whole of the Northern hilly area. In the hilly area which falls in U. P., the two most important groups of Brahmans are the Kurmachelis and Garhwalis. They worship both Shiva and Shakti Both of these groups are traditionally non-vegetarians. In these groups also the Brahmans eat only vegetarian food on the occasions like Janmastami, Purnima (full moon-day) and Ekadashi (the eleventh day in each fortnight of every month). They fall in the eighth category. The Kashmiri Pandits on Shiva Ratri worship Vatak, a child of Shiva's wrath against Yoginis, who stole Parvati. On this day the Kashmiri Brahmans eat meat and fish. The most important goddess of Kashmir is Sharika, who is regarded as the patron-goddess and she is also offered meat. This caste-group is also a Shaiva—Shakta group in the sense that in their rituals Shiva and Mother Goddess are most important. They do worship Krishna and observe fasts and festivals prescribed by Vaishnava Dharma but Vishnuism as such has not been able to influence their behaviour appreciably. Their behaviour still continues in the traditional Shaiva-Shakta style, because normally they are non-vegetarians. They also fall in the eighth category.

Similarly, on food habits of other clean castes also the influence

of sects can be traced. A majority of Kshatriyas (popularly known as Thakurs) of U. P are basically Shaktas. The Thakurs of the village Bachhna in the District of Kanpur say that about four hundred years ago some families of Kshatriyas belonging to Somvanshi clan came to this part of the district from across the Ganges. After walking for the whole day they stopped at a place for passing the night. They were carrying the statue of Durga (Mother Goddess) with them. They set the statue of Durga at one place and divided themselves into six groups. Each group moved in a different direction. One of these groups, while passing through a dense forest, noticed a temple of Durga and close to it they saw a cow feeding her calf. They decided to inhabit this auspicious place They named it as 'Bachhra' (calf) which is now known as Bachhna This mythological history of the village suggests the importance of Durga in their lives The Thakurs of this village like other Thakurs are mostly non-vegetarians. However, those Thakurs who have been to Gaya, in Bihar have left non-vegetarian food altogether (Singh J N : personal communication). Tej Bahadur Singh who is an elderly Thakur of Kanpur says that this is generally true of all Thakurs of U. P. and Rajasthan.

The 'Istadevatas' (main gods) of Khatris are 'Devis' or goddesses and thus they are also Shaktas. Many Khatris of Northern India, however, are followers of Radhaswami sub-sects which prohibits non-vegetarian food. Other sub-sects of Vishnuism are also popular among them. The result is that among Khatris one can find both non-vegetarian and vegetarian families depending on their affiliation with Shakta and Vaishnava sects respectively Among both, Thakurs and Khatris, there are converted Vaishnavas who fall in the fourth category. For Vaishyas the most important goddess is Lakshmi, the spouse of Vishnu. Therefore, she is also vegetarian. The result is that traditional religious families of Vaishyas are pure vegetarians. Nobody in their families ever eats non-vegetarian food.

The Bhakti (adoration or worship) movement of the Medieval period of Indian History has rendered singular service to the spread of the behaviour pattern set by Vishnuism. The greatest advantage with the saints of Vishnuism and Shivism was that they spoke in the language of the people. The most important of these saints in the South, were called as the Alvars, Nayammars and Adiyars, who belonged to various castes and classes. Ramanuj (1016—1137), Madhwa (13th century), Ramanand (last quarter of fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries), Tulsidas (1532—1624), Chaitanya (1485— .) and Namdeva and Tukaram spread the Vaishnava values throughout

India. They emphasised the superiority of the path of devotion over ritualistic sacrifice and mere book knowledge and wisdom (Rao 1958: 201). *Many saints of this Medieval period like Raidas belonged* to lower castes. They were heard and followed by low caste people with respect. Besides devotion the other important value emphasised by these Vaishnava and Shaiva saints was abstenance from meat and wine. Thus these Vaishnava values spread in all castes and, the values of *Vaishnava Dharma*, which have contributed to the *Pollution* concept in great measure, have been brought to the illiterate masses by the saints of Medieval period, because they adopted the language of the people for communicating their ideas.

This fact explains the vegetarianism of women belonging to the families of non-vegetarians. The women of India have adopted the path of devotion and abstenance from non-vegetarian food and wine without much exception. In these cases adoption of vegetarian food is to entitle oneself for salvation and not for the membership of a higher status group. When a person belonging to any lower caste or untouchable caste adopts Vaishnava way of life he is called a 'Vaishnava' or 'Bhagat' (devotee) by his friends and neighbours. In such a situation an upper caste Vaishnava would feel close to him because both belong to the same sect-group. This in-group feeling is at the sect-level.

Vegetarianism is a Vaishnava value and not a value of the whole of Hindu religion or of caste system as such. This is further evidenced by the fact that throughout Northern India vegetarian food is equated with Vaishnava food. One can observe it in the cities where vegetarian restaurants are known as 'Vaishnava Bhojnalayas' and not 'Shakahari (vegetarian) Bhojnalays'. On the occasion of feasts among many castes of U. P every guest is asked whether he is a Vaishnava or not for ascertaining the number of persons who are vegetarians and non-vegetarians respectively.

Thus we see that non-vegetarian and vegetarian foods are associated with the ritual-complexes of Shaktism and Vishnuism respectively. Other sects are not so important in this respect. These ritual-complexes and other tenets prescribing or prohibiting certain kinds of behaviour are the most important variables in analysing the way of life of religious Hindus even today. For studying the food patterns of non-religious or secularised Hindus one has to take into consideration the contending values of Westernisation and Gandhian Ethics of non-violence. Among the Westernised Hindus a vegetarian and teetotalar is an 'outcaste'. In the Westernised group of people the scientifically-proved superiority of non-vegetarian food

for nourishment of body is a defence which cannot be challenged on rational grounds.

In certain areas (Mayer 1960 : 45) the emergence of popular governments dominated by vegetarian castes is also influencing the food of the people Prediction for the future is risky Nevertheless, it is true that increasing secularisation and westernisation will preclude the Hindu sects from influencing the food of Hindus. In a secularised milieu much will depend on the success of competing values of non-vegetarian food of westernised group and of vegetarian food of the group which is emphasising the ethical considerations. In the political and economic systems, it seems, the westernised group is gaining status, and therefore, they are likely to influence the food patterns of the Hindus considerably.

Conclusions :

1. The 'Pollution concept' of Hindus, as developed by Stevenson, is not universally accepted by all sections of Hindus. It includes values prescribed by Smritis for the different castes and also the values prescribed by sects for their followers.
2. The different castes can be grouped under these sects according to their dominant influence on a majority of persons belonging to a caste.
3. Vegetarianism is specially a value of Vishnuism so is teetotalism. They are not values of Brahmans as such.
4. Broadly speaking the whole of India can be divided into four regions from the point of view of the spread of these sects. Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa can be grouped into the first region in which Shaktism is dominant, but Vishnuism is also found. In the second region we may include U. P., Punjab, Rajasthan, M. P., Gujrat and Maharastra. In this region Vishnuism is dominant, but Shivism and Shaktism are also found in certain caste groups In the third region may be included all the hilly regions of Northern India in the Himalayas, right from Kashmir to Assam. In this region Shivism, aligned with Shaktism, is prevalent. A mild undercurrent of Vishnuism is also found. The whole of the peninsular India may be included in the fourth region in which Shivism associated with Vishnuism in the devotional form is prevalent.
5. The individual variations and taking of vegetarian food by non-vegeterians on certain occasions like Janmastami, Purnima and Ekadashi and vegetarinism of women among the non-vegetarian

families can be explained only through the influence of Vishnuism.

6. The saints of Medieval period succeeded in spreading the values of Vishnuism among the masses belonging to all castes, upper or lower or even untouchables because they spoke in the language of the people.
7. Many lower castes and untouchable castes like the upper castes found a way out to achieve salvation through the adoption of Vaishnava way of life. Thus the adoption of vegetarian food and teetotalism, in a majority of cases, has been to equip and entitle oneself for salvation and not necessarily to raise one's caste status.
8. In the group of secularised Hindus, Westernised persons holding high social status are disseminating the scientifically—superior value of non vegetarian food. With increasing secularisation, non-vegetarian food and wine are likely to be adopted by more and more Hindus.

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NOTES

1. This paper has arisen out of my correspondence with Prof. D. G. Mandelbaum on certain points raised in the draft of his forth-coming book on 'The System of Caste in India.' In the month of March 1960 this paper was read before a meeting of South Asia Colloqium of The Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, U S. A. I am grateful to Prof. D G Mandelbaum, Mrs. Iravati Karve, G. Berreman, University of California; L. P. Vidyarthi, Ranchi; D. N. Sinha, Institute of Technology Kharagpur; K S. Mathur and T.N Madan, Lucknow, M. Dwivedi and J. N Singh, D. A. V. College, Kanpur for suggestions, comments and information.

2. Regarding the South and North variations in food patterns Mrs. Karve informed me of the theory that the Southern Dravidians were agriculturalists and therefore vegetarians, while the Aryans were pastoralists and therefore, they were non-vegetarians, depending upon cow both for milk and beef.

3. According to the Sanskrit texts there are only four Sampradayas named after the exponents of four schools of Vaishnava thought viz., Ramanuj, Nimbark, Madhwa and Vallabh. Variations in them have been called as 'Mat and Matantar' (doctrines and sub doctrines). For Vishnuism, Shivism, Shaktism and Smartism, the term 'Dharama' has been used in Sanskrit literature But, in this paper the term sect has been used for Vishnuism, Shaktism, Shivism and Smartisms and sub sect for the various Sampradayas and Mats and Matantars of Vishnuism.

4. Weber maintains that the distinguished strata of Brahamhood always remained remote from accommodating the folk-cult of Shaktism, which was accepted by the urban dwellers of Bengal in the form of adoration of naked woman (1958 : 298). Today the Brahmans of Bengal and Bihar by and large are Shaktas. In fact Tantrism was diffused through all the classes (Ibid : 302) of Bengal and Bihar. Shivism, under the influence of Shankaracharya, was dominated by vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol (Ibid : 301) Shankaracharya is made central to doctrine by Smartas (Ibid 299) and thus Smartas have also been led to a life of vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol. In the ancient Shiva cult and ancient Shakti cult, in a manner originally peculiar to his wife, the goddess Durga received the orgy and blood sacrifice (Ibid , 303). Thus wherever Shivism occurs with Shaktism, non-vegetarian food is not tabooed.

5. In Vishnuism there are two cults, based on Ram and Krishna, two incarnations of Vishnu There are two founders of two different sects of Ram cult in the Medieval period Ramanuj (twelfth century) and Ramanand (fourteenth century) Ramanand's sect is an off shoot of Ramanuja sect Ramanand's school was indifferent to caste distinctions Among his immediate students were alongside a Rajput, a Jat, Kahar, a weaver and Raidas (a chamar) Later Dadu and Malukdas also became founders of sects based on Ram cult. The students of Ramanand belonging to lower castes helped spread of Ram cult among lower castes. In Krishna cult which is by far the most popular and widespread, there are two major sects founded by Vallabh and Madhwa, an off shoot of the latter is the sect founded by Chaitanya in Bengal. The Temple of Srinath Ji at Nathdwara near Udaipur in Rajasthan is the most important centre of this sect and its followers are usually rich Vaishyas of Rajasthan and Gujrat. Chaitanya's followers are found in Bengal, Assam, Orissa and Bihar. Among his followers were Kayasthas, Satsudras (followers of ritually pure industries) and also the ancient brewer castes (Weber 1958 : 317), whose adoption of vegetarianism and teetotalism was interpreted by Bailey as Sanskritisation (1857 : 270). Madhwa founded his sect in the fourteenth century and his main followers were Gauda and Sanadhya Brahmans living in West U. P. The followers of Madhwagaudiya Gurus, today, largely belong to Vaishya castes and there are some Khatri followers (Shishyas) also (Goswami 1961). This can give some idea how Vaishnava values of life were spread in some of the important castes of Northern India.

PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE IN THREE VILLAGES OF RAJASTHAN

G. M. Carstairs

In India, religion is omnipresent, and manifests itself in such a multitude of seemingly unrelated, often contradictory, forms, that the Western observer commonly despairs of ever confining it within an ordered descriptive scheme. This is especially true of popular Hinduism, the religion of the poor and uneducated, which shows an inexhaustible variety of local expressions of belief and practice.

It is no doubt for this very reason that European scholars concentrated for so long on the study of the Sanskrit texts, and the writings of the classical philosophers: voluminous though these texts were, they did at least give the re-assurance that there was a physical limit to the data which they must comprehend. In recent years, however, the development of modern field studies by social anthropologists has confronted us with the need to grapple with this vast conglomeration of popular beliefs, and to find some clues by which it may be better understood, some consistencies in its different manifestations which will enable us to classify and marshall the phenomena, and which (if they are soundly based) will make it easier for future field-workers to recognise similar patterns in the religious life of villages in different parts of India, as yet untouched by field research.

The first major classification is between orthodox Hinduism (also described as Brahmanical, Vedic or Sanskritic Hinduism) and primitive animism. This distinction has been recognised for many centuries by Hindu religious teachers: they knew from their study of the Vedas that the Aryan precursors of modern high-caste Hindus found a savage, short-statured, dark-skinned race of peoples living in the jungles, and that these people's worship was all of demons and local godlings. The concept of the elect and the barbarians has been incorporated into the caste structure of Hinduism, and every high-caste Hindu considers it quite natural that the Sudras should have primitive and unenlightened cults of their own. Critical reading of the earliest of the Hindu scriptures, the Rig-Veda, combined with the findings of modern Indian archæology, have however thrown a new

light upon this old concept. It now appears that the orthodox Hinduism of today is vastly different from the religion of the first Aryan conquerors (in contrast to the ascetic, non-violent, world-renouncing ideals of contemporary Brahmans, they were a robust, carnal warrior-people, taking pleasure in feasting and drinking, and apt for love); and it has also been shown that when the Aryans came[1], they found not only jungle tribesmen in India, but also the highly developed, centuries old civilisation which had built great cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro The Aryans defeated the city-civilisation in war, but it seems probable that many of that culture's values and beliefs lived on, to become part of Hindu orthodoxy. As yet, too little is definitely known about the character of religion in those old cities to amplify these suggestions : but at least it seems established that the worship of Lord Shiva, and his symbolic representation by a phallic stone, comes from that source[2]. It remains for the archæologist and the prehistorian to piece together the evidences which will no doubt come to light, to show in what other respects the religious beliefs of the old culture modified those of the new

The social anthropologist has a different contribution to make. By studying and describing the complex of existing popular religious beliefs, he can show how they fall into a number of different categories. Eventually, these in turn may be related to their historical precursors ; but in the meantime they can be shown to illustrate different concepts of the relationship between man and the universe of his experience, and to provide alternative means of appeasing men's emotional needs. With this aim in mind, the writer proposes to review the different manifestations of religious life which he saw while living in three villages in Rajasthan, in 1950, 1951 and 1952. All three were in the western half of the Udaipur Division (formerly the State of Mewar) which is here traversed by the low ranges of the Aravli hills. He stayed in the first village (Sujarupa) from January, 1950 to June 1950, being accompanied for 2½ months of that time by an Indian Christian youth, who acted as interpreter : thereafter he relied on his own command of Hindustani. He stayed in the next village (Delwara) from January 1951 to November 1951, and in the Bhil hamlet of Khajuria from December 1951 to February 1952. In the first and third of these villages the normal dialect of the people differed considerably from Hindustani, but this was spoken by most adult males ; in Delwara, everyone spoke Hindustani, although village dialects were also used in speaking with peasants coming in from the surrounding countryside.

SUJARUPA

This village, lying on an uneven plateau near the main ridge of the Aravlis in the north-west corner of Udaipur Division, was really only a *baria*, or hamlet. It consisted of a huddle of cottages with mud plastered stone walls, and roofs covered loosely with home-made earthenware ties. All round its periphery there stood man-high fences of thorn branches, enclosing the cattle-yard of each household. There was one main entrance to the hamlet, a heavy door and behind it a lane which traversed a long room, with a raised floor on either side of the lane. This room was the village *paul*, a meeting-place and guestchamber for the whole village.

There were 25 households in Sujarupa, of which 24 were farmers, of the *Rawat* community, and one (whose house was built apart from the rest) a leather-worker or *Regar*. All the Rawat families were descended from a common great-grandfather, Suja Singh, who had moved out from his natal village of Lakhagudha two miles to the west, in order to break new fields for himself and his six sons to cultivate. At the same time his brother also built himself a house in the un-reclaimed jungle, where there is now the closely related hamlet of Hematon-ki-guar. They cleared the jungle, dug wells, and levelled out new fields which are still the mainstay of both these villages.

The Rawat people have an interesting history, claiming to the descendants of children begotten by Rajputs with women of the Mina tribe, which is found in many parts of Rajasthan[3]. They remember their Rajput ancestry, invariably claiming to be of the line of the hero Prithviraj Chohan, who ruled in Ajmer at the beginning of the twelfth century, but they are never willing to admit their Mina strain. Indeed, the most important feature of their social life is the insistence with which they assert their full Rajput status. During his stay in Sujarupa, the writer twice accompanied wedding parties which went for the marriage ceremony to villages in the hills some fifteen and twenty-four miles away respectively. At every stage of the proceedings from the preliminary betrothal visits, to the rites performed after the bridegroom has brought his young wife to her future home, the family *Dholi* or *Bhat* plays an important role. He is the historian, herald, and minstrel of those Rawat lineages to which his family is hereditarily connected. When he meets any member of that lineage for the first time after an absence, he greets him with an invocation of his ancestry, thus : "Moti Hama ka, Hama Teja ka, Teja Suja ka, Suja Rupa ka, Rupa Devi ka—Bara Salam !"

It is he who sees that the formal etiquette appropriate to each stage of the ceremonies is observed, and he who precedes the wedding-party on their way, singing resonant, if unintelligible, ballads of the prowess of the bridegroom's ancestors. He represents in fact the corporate memory, as well as the claim to social esteem, of the lineage: *time and again the old men of the village, when asked about* events of one or two generations ago, would say: "Ask the *dholi*, he knows all those things better than we do".

On the other hand, it is these same old men who take the most evident delight in exchanging formal courtesies of address and deportment which imply a high-born status for their community. When visiting another village, they liked to dress in what might be their only respectable suit of white *dhoti*, coarse village shirt, and massive turban, with a shawl of white hand-woven cloth over one shoulder, and the family sword in one hand. Thus attired, they did indeed look very like one of the proud but penniless Rajput Thakurs, squires of a few acres, on whom they model themselves

All over Rajasthan, one finds similar instances of low-caste groups who are trying to raise themselves in the social scale by adopting the dress, customs and titles of the Rajputs In Delwara village, for example, there is a caste called Yadow, which was formerly engaged in leather-work, and so ranked very low indeed: but for the past three generations they have turned to farming and stone-masonry as their sole occupations, have adopted the suffix *Singh* to their names, and now claim to be Rajputs. They are not the only ones. On one occasion the writer stopped before a country cottage, near Delwara, and after talking with its owner for some minutes, asked him his caste. "Rajput", he said.

Then, on being asked to which clan of Rajputs he belonged, he became confused and said: "Kumhar Rajput" (that is, "a potter-Rajput")

Such claims are contemptuously rejected by the real Rajputs; but they represent a means of social mobility which has perhaps always existed to some degree, but which is ripe for rapid expansion under the new socially progressive Congress Governments. They are made with the greatest conviction by those groups which can actually assert that they possess some Rajput blood in their ancestry. In Delwara this is true of the Daroga caste, one-time personal slaves of the Rajput rulers, and still their servants. The Darogas constitute a sort of below-stairs aristocracy, patterning their lineages on those of the princely families with whose service they have been associated: and they also add the suffix Singh to their names. In the Bhil

country there exists a similar sub-division, the Garasias, being the descendants of Bhil women who have had children by Rajputs. In this case, however, the Garasias have not evolved appreciably different customs from their Bhil Kinsmen. They regard themselves as superior, and will not marry or sit to eat with Bhils, but in their dress, their names and speech and religious beliefs they are indistinguishable

The Rawats' affectation of nobility is a precarious one, and collapses at the first test. The Rajput prides himself on the fact that Rajput widows never re-marry: indeed they still sometimes commit *sati*, voluntarily submitting to being burned to death on their husband's funeral pyre, which is considered a mark of extreme piety and brings great honour on the husband's family. Nothing of the kind exists among the Rawats. Instead, widows are often taken in a less formal but still recognised type of marriage called *nata* Traces of their Mina origin also survive in fragments of old custom. For example, on the third day after a death, Rawats prepare a dish of rice and milk and sugar, called the *siraum*, and leave it at the burning place, calling out the name of the dead person as they do so. This is a common Hindu practice: but only the Minas and the Rawats, in this part of the country, have the additional custom that the bearer of the *siraum* should be followed to the burning-ghat and back by another man who carries a toy bow and arrow "at the ready" as if to ward off a supernatural threat. Again, the Rawat men-folk have given up dancing, at which Minas excel: but at Holi they perform a traditional stick-dance, called *gher*, which is found also among the Mina and the Bhil tribespeople. It will not be surprising, therefore, if the religious practices of the Rawats reflect the ambiguity of their social pretensions.

SATSANG AND BHAKTI-MARG.

The writer's first introduction to the religious life of Sujarupa was on the evening of 18th January, 1950, just two days after he had pitched his tent outside the village. In the course of the day he had happened to ask one of the younger men whether they sometimes sang *bhajans* in these parts, and in reply he promised to come to the tent that evening with some friends for a hymn-singing. They came, and with them several small boys and older men, until over a score were seated close-packed in the tent, and sang for a couple of hours to the music of a five-stringed guitar, and to the rhythmical chiming of small brass cymbals, called *majera*. Some of the hymns which they sang were of recent composition, but the majority were tradi-

tional, many of them by Kabir, some by Mirabai: all of them were in broad "*Magra*" dialect, and had to be explained to the writer in Hindustani.

But this was only a foretaste of what was to come two nights later. Then, guests arrived on foot from distant villages, summoned to attend a special *satsang*, a night devoted to hymnsinging. They were entertained to large platefuls of a sweet pudding, called *churma*, a portion of which was also delivered to the tent, and at about nine p m the writer made his way to the *paul*, which had been re-plastered with mud and cowdung for the occasion. The floor was covered with white cloths, and mid-way along one wall a folded quilt had been set for the most important guest, a dignified, authoritative middle-aged holy man, dressed in saffron-coloured robes, who sat cross-legged and stiff-backed, as if in contemplation This was the Saddhu Bhur Nath, a hermit from the other side of Goram hill He amiably invited the writer to sit at his elbow, and throughout the evening leaned across from time to time to explain in clear Hindustani what was going on. In front of the Saddhu was set a brass tray covered with a red cloth, and on it two brass bowls filled with flowers, and another in which were set one or two burning incense sticks. Opposite the Saddhu, a white cloth had been hung against the wall, and on it hung a framed colour-print depicting Krishna as a young man.

As each new arrival entered the *paul*, he discarded his shoes in the lane, climbed up to the floor level and greeted the whole company with clasped hands, saying: "Jai Guru Maharaj". To this, all those present made the same reply. The new arrivals then came forward and clasped the Saddhu's ankles as a token of deference, then gave a formal hand-clasp to their friends in the audience before themselves sitting down on the floor. A young man of Sujarupa, Devi Singh, eventually came in carrying his *bina* (the five-stringed guitar) and several pairs of *majeras*, one of which was taken by the Saddhu. Devi Singh struck up a slow musical chant, an invocation to Ganesh; and after it, another hymn with many references to the God Ram-Devji The Saddhu beat time gently with his *majeras*. At the end of this hymn there was a cry of: "Sath Guru, Dev ki jai!"—but not many people took it up. There was still a feeling that they were at the preliminary stages.

Seeing the writer taking notes, the Saddhu explained to him that "Sath Guru" meant Parmeshwar, the supreme God, and "Jai Guru Maharaj" is a greeting which is exchanged by all who are earnestly seeking the truth. Much later, one learned that it is the greet-

ing especially favoured by members of the religious sect known as the Kabir Panth. Already this evening it was noticed, as one *bhajan* followed another, that many were by Kabir: their last stanza containing an envoy in the form: "Thus saith Kabir..." As the hymn-singing got properly under way, the audience's enthusiasm increased. After each hymn, someone would call out: Bolie Sath Guru!", and everyone would reply: "Sath Guru Dev Ki Jai!" At times, some would exclaim: "Kabir, Kabir!", as people cry out "Hallelujah!" at a revival meeting in the west.

In the intervals between hymns, the Saddhu would call upon the singer to expound the meaning of the verses he had sung, and this frequently gave rise to an open discussion, ended at times by an authoritative exposition on the part of the Saddhu, at other times by a call: "Sunao bhai, bhajan bolo!"—"Strike up brother—another hymn!"

The *bina* was passed from hand to hand, being played by the one who sang the verse most (*bhajans* had a refrain in which many singers joined). Late in the evening, the Saddhu called out. "Give it to the *harijans*, let's hear them." At this, the writer became aware that three sweepers from Lakhagudha village were sitting in the dust of the lane, in the middle of the *paul* but at a lower level than the rest. They sang three hymns, the refrain of one being: "Why do you avoid my touch: am I really so unclean?" and the others emphasising the equality of all who devoutly seek truth.

The climax of the evening came after midnight, when a cow-dung fire was brought in upon a tile, and the Saddhu made offerings of coconut and melted butter upon it. A new hymn with a very lively rhythm was now played and sung, everyone standing up and joining in with fervour. Three members of the audience were so carried away that they began to perform a dance in the middle of the crowded room: it consisted of a few shuffling steps, turning to one side and back, while the trunk and arms swayed in gestures expressive of self-abandonment in a sort of ecstasy. Meanwhile a five-wick lamp was set on a brass tray, and this was carried all round the audience by three worshippers in turn. Before each person, they waved the lamp three times, and he held his hands as if warming them at the flame, then saluted it. Each worshipper thereafter went all round the audience, clasping everyone's ankles in a gesture of humility, and being saluted in return. The ceremony concluded with the scattering of flowers and then red powder over everyone: some crystalline sweets, called *misri* were then offered to the fire, and the remainder distributed among the audience.

After this ceremony the company sat down again, and gossiped and handed round pipes. There was a feeling of cheerfulness and relaxed tension. In a few minutes' time another *bhajan* was struck up, and one succeeded another, with intervals of discussion, until dawn.

This *satsang* has been described at some length for two reasons. Firstly, the singing of *bhajans*, either for a few hours or all night long was the commonest form of religious activity in Sujarupa. This was done especially on the second, eleventh, or fifteenth day of each half of the lunar month, but it might take place at any time when there was a quorum of five or more participants. Secondly, this particular *satsang* was a special occasion, being held in honour of the *Guru* of Hira Singh, one of the senior members of the village and a devotee of this type of worship. In October 1950 this Guru, by name Maharam, who lived in a village near the town of Beawar, some 40 miles from Sujarupa, announced that he was about to take *samadhi*. This meant that he had advanced to such a point in his religious life that he was ready at a given moment voluntarily to take leave of his body while his soul passed straight into that of Parmatma, the all-encompassing divine soul, and so became released from the bondage of re-birth. Some hundreds of his followers gathered together for the occassion, singing hymns day and night, and at the appointed hour they lowered him, sitting cross-legged in a state of contemplation, into the ready grave, and buried him alive. The writer was later shown the white marble shrine which was built over the spot. Twelve days after this event, a great *satsang* was held at that place, in which over seven thousand worshippers took part—the local Government authorities gave them a free issue of grain rations for the event—and this *satsang* in Sujarupa was one of many organised by that Guru's disciples to celebrate his *samadhi*.

Later, the writer was to learn that the *satsangs* are an expression of *bhakti-marg* (the way of devotion) which is one of the great divisions of Hindu worship. Followers of this way attach themselves to one, or sometimes more than one, of a number of sects. The total number of such sects is very large, but in any given area only one or two will be represented. Their teachings also vary, some emphasising the worship of Vishnu or Shiva, or one of the lesser Gods of the Hindu pantheon, some (like the Kabir-panth) teaching a refined monotheism and the brotherhood of man. It is noteworthy that the Kabir-panth is the most widely prevalent in this district, because the most celebrated of local Gods is Ram-Devji, or Rama-Pir : and tradition has it that he, like the poet Kabir, sought to unite Moham-

rmedans and Hindus in one form of worship.

The name of Ram-Devji is also associated with the worship of *sakti*, or female-energy, as personified by the Goddess, Devi. This form of worship is akin to the other *panths*, but with the difference that the supreme object of their devotion is not represented by light or fire, but by the act of sexual intercourse, and by semen, which is believed to issue from both male and female in that act. To the genuine adherent, these sects represent a more profound and compelling religious experience than do the others; but to the sceptical outsider they are the object of ridicule and disgust. This ambivalent attitude is expressed even in the verbal traditions of the Ram-Devji cult, which describe how, when he wished to be accepted as a member of the Mahadharam (one of these sexual *panths*) his wife was revolted by their rituals and refused to accompany him. New members are admitted only in pairs, so it was not until his adoptive sister (*dharm-bahin*) Dali accompanied him that he was accepted as a member of the Mahadharam. Incidentally, this shows how completely the ritual act of sex was divorced from the idea of promiscuous intercourse, because to have sexual relations with a *dharam-bahin* is considered no less sacrilegious than to commit incest with one's true sister.

Great secrecy attaches to these sexual panths, which are condemned by high-caste Hindus; but the writer was able to learn that one variety, known as the *Kanchli-panth* (so called because at their meetings the women members discarded their *kanchlis*, or bodices, and put them in a large vessel, and during the course of the hymn-singing the presiding Guru called out the men one by one, giving each a *kanchli* chosen at random : this couple then retired behind a curtain to perform the ritual act of sex) was extensively practised among the Rawats living some twenty miles to the North, while one householder of Sujarupa and his wife were not only members of the Mahadharm, but also Gurus of that sect, with their own disciples.

THE BHOPA.

Within a few days of the great *satsang*, the villagers of Sujarupa invited the writer to leave his tent and make his home in the *paul*; and this, though lacking in privacy, made an excellent vantage point from which to keep in touch with all the goings—on of the village. On the night of 24th January, 1950, several persons went out of their way to remind him that there was to be an all-night ceremony at the shrine on top of a little hillock near Hamaton-ki-guar. It was the bi-annual festival of the god Devji. The oldest inhabitant of Sujarupa,

white-bearded Pitha Singh explained that this shrine is maintained by the potters of Hamaton-ki guar. It is they who are its priests and they and their women-folk will sing long songs appropriate to this night—songs about strife between Gods and men. Devji himself was "a Rajput, someone near the Rajah : he wore a ring on his right fourth finger"; and that is all he can remember about him.

At nine p.m. it is dark and cold. Some thirty or forty men sit round a large log fire close by the shrine on the hill-top In the outer darkness a crowd of women and girls is gathering. When some more people have arrived, one of the attendants of the shrine goes round giving each one a pinch of chopped *bel*-leaves. The writer is told that when the Gods are worshipped at a festival such as this, those taking part will fast until the worship is over. By eating these leaves, which have been offered to the Gods in the shrine, they are united in a worshipful mood, and in the morning they will all break their fast together.

The three potters who are the priests, or *bhopas*, of this shrine are called Kesa, Dola and Anjari Kumhar. It is Kesa who begins the formal proceedings by chanting a series of stanzas in a high-pitched voice. Dola, the oldest of the three, sings a short refrain, in which many voices join. At times Kesa pauses to explain the substance of his song in conversational tones, and others in the audience also put in a word now and again. Meanwhile the women, sitting now beside another fire a few yards off, sing songs of their own. When this has been going on for over an hour, a young man sitting near the front of the main group gives a sudden cry, and goes into a sort of fit. He shakes convulsively, where he squats, so that his turban falls off, and his arms wave impulsively about his face, while his breath comes in loud gaps. As suddenly, after about five minutes, the fit leaves him : he sits breathing heavily, then gropes for his turban and ties it on again. This was Anjari, who was not expected to become possessed at this time.

The men's singing is now continuous and charged with emotion. In the shrine, two young men blow long notes on conch-shell horns, and another beats a gong. Suddenly Dola, who has been sitting as if waiting for something, takes a loud indrawn breath, and then he also goes into a shaking fit, rocking back and forwards on his heels where he sits. For many minutes he quivers and shakes and gasps, as if he is in the grip of some physical orgasm which will not reach its climax. At last he gives a strangled cry and gets to his feet, his whole body still jerking convulsively. Then he runs into the shrine, picks up a handful of chains and belabours his own back, panting and

grunting as he does so. After this he issues from inside the shrine and shouts a few phrases over the heads of the audience, then goes in once more This happens fifteen times, and then everyone turns back to face the fire, but he remains crouching and quivering, squatting upon a low platform on the floor before the row of images.

The writer is told that he has been uttering prophecies to the effect that the rains would be good this year, the crops would be plentiful, the cattle spared from disease. He did not prophesy anything bad. Afterwards, as he sat in the shrine, people came to him singly, pouring out their offerings of a few handfuls of corn on to the floor before him, and asking what would be the outcome of a sickness in their family, or a proposed marriage, or the loss of one of their cattle. Still shaking and panting, he would look towards the images of the gods, and then gasp out a brief reply.

Next day, the youngest *bhopa*, Anjari, showed the writer the whole array of gods, whose images were cast in relief on heavy earthenware plaques. Two are standing male figures representing Kala and Gora Bhaironji; another is Ganesh. There are four plaques representing Devji-Maharaj, whose shrine this is, and these all show the forms of a black snake. Next to these again are two well-designed cobra-shapes, described as Kagal-Dev. Anjari says that this is where people come if they are bitten by a snake, to be cured. Asked if it is he who cures them, he says: "No, it is their work," pointing to the snake-gods. By standers explain that when this happens the *bhopa* appeals to Kagal-dev, and his spirit comes to them, causing them to "play" (*khelna* is the expression used to describe the quivering state of trance-possession) "Unko dev ka bhav ata hai"—the breath of God enters them).

For a time, one was at a loss to know whether this Devji were himself a snake-god, or a human being who had assumed that form. A later informant, describing the Devji songs, said that he was one of the Bagh-Rawats (a division of the Rawats supposedly descended from a lion-headed youth); but it was left to a Sujarupa villager called Mol Singh to clinch the matter. He described how one night he was coming back from Lakhagudha, and he was pursued by a ghost. First it cried with the voice of a sheep, and then it whimpered like a child, saying: "Wait for me!", and: "Carry me!" But he knew that this was a favourite device of ghosts and so he hurried on; and then, out of the conrer of his eye he saw it coming after him, like a flickering flame. Just as he reached the turn of the road near the shrine, he saw Devji Maharaj himself appear, a shining figure on a white horse, and the ghost turned tail: but for this

it would have surely killed him.

Nearly everyone in Sujarupa went to this festival, and listened to the prophecies that were given ; but no-one seemed to go there for advice on their personal troubles. Instead, the writer heard constant references to the great gifts of another *bhopa*, who "played' each Sunday night at a shrine some six miles off. His god was, strictly speaking, a demon, called Danaji. In former times he had lived in that little valley, which he still haunted in spirit. The *bhopa* there is a Rawat named Goma Singh, and he was "called" to do this work by a visitation of the Dana in a dream. At first he refused to become a *bhopa*, saying that he wasn't cut out for that sort of work : then he fell sick, and again saw the Danaji in a dream, and this time he consented to do what he was told.

The writer attended one of his Sunday-night sessions, watching him tremble in his trance-like state for over two hours, while a succession of patients and supplicants crouched before him in turn. He diagnosed some as being struck by ghosts, some by witches : often he left the diagnosis unspoken, and simply called out his instructions. Some had to bring offerings of nuts and lemons, some were to tie twelve knots in a coloured thread—"Five in the name of Rama-Pir, five in the name of Danaji, one for Ishwar and one for Mahadev"—and wear this round their neck. The parents of children were frequently told to carry their sick child thrice round the little shrine. One man, thin and wasted, complained of a chronic cough. He was very probably consumptive, there being a great deal of tuberculosis in this region. The Bhopa declared that this was a simple illness, not a case of witch or demon. He made the patient sit near, then leaning over him sucked noisily at the nape of his neck, like a dog worrying a rabbit. He gasped for air once or twice, then announced that he had sucked out the poison : now the man would get well.

It was noticeable that the villagers approached him respectfully but quite without awe. Sometimes they would fail to catch his instructions, and ask him to repeat them ; sometimes they would grumble and complain that a promised improvement had not come about, and sometimes the *bhopa* would crack a joke in between his statacco commands. Always, however, they would make a deep obeisance to him at the end of their interview, addressing him as Maharaj, or Andata. At the end of the long session, the *bhopa* gave a loud cry : "Listen ! Two things I tell you. Come here regularly to pay homage to Danaji : and worship God." He gave one more frenzied shout, pointing his right hand in the air, then slowly it was

lowered, and he became a man again. His first action was to bow down towards the shrine, pressing his head on the ground, and then he went round all the men who sat waiting in the firelight, clasping their legs and saluting them with folded hands, and then he sat down to smoke a pipe. He now greeted the writer as if seeing him for the first time, and reminded him that they had met before, when he had been sick with double pneumonia in the government hospital of a nearby small town. "You felt my pulse and examined me, and said : 'You will get better'. I have not forgotten that."

"You and I do the same work, we try to help sick people."

To this he replied by pointing upwards with one finger : "It is God's work. We can only do it when it is His will : By ourselves, what can we do ?"

There were many other *bhopas* practising in the vicinity, but not other commanded such confidence of this of Danaji. For one thing, it was said that the virtue of a shrine would only be at its full strength for one *jug*, here defined as a span of twelve years , and for another, it was known that sometimes *bhopas* were dishonest and simulated possession by a God although in fact the spirit did not come. In one such case, some young men of the village played a trick on the *bhopa* to show him up. They secretly heated his chains until they were nearly red-hot, and then when the *bhav* supposedly came to him, he reached for the chains to belabour himself—then danced with rage, pouring out a stream of oaths as he nursed his burned fingers. The elders of that village pronounced that this was no true *bhopa* : were he really possessed, he would not have been aware of any pain.

VILLAGE GODS.

At the roadside in front of Sujarupa there are two conspicuous objects. One is a square pillar, shoulder-high, faced with white plaster, and with a crenellated top, and the other a low stone platform, with a dark stone set upright above it. This stone is daubed with red paint and above it there hangs a red pennant at the end of a bamboo pole. The former was described as a *pathwari*, or as *Ganga-Mata*, and the latter as Hanuman. Later, two other wayside *chaukis*, or sacred sites, were pointed out, one an inconspicuous stone on a mound near the *pathwari* ; this was a *Bhaironji*. The other was a tumbled-down stone platform, built round the base of a young tree, consecrated to Sitala-Mata, the Goddess who controls small-pox.

These shrines were generally quite neglected, except for special

occasions. Thus, on the seventh day of Cheth month, which is here regarded as the day especial to that Goddess, the women of the village tidied up the Sitala-Mata platform and left offerings of flowers upon it. It was not, however, until a few days before the marriage of one of the Sujarupa youths that the writer became aware of the full number of the shrines associated with this hamlet. On the night before the bridegroom set off to the bride's village, attended by most of the men and grown up boys, he was conducted by the *dholi* round all the village gods, in order to make a token offering of coconut and melted butter to each, and to pay homage *dhok dena* at each shrine. He was followed by a procession of his women relatives, singing appropriate songs. The procession visited first a small hill-top on the north side of the village, where there was a chain of stones, on top of which lay a weather-beaten earthenware plaque with the representation of a seated figure. This was Goramji, the God of the mountain peak, six miles off, which is the chief feature of the local landscape Nearby there is a platform at the base of a young tree, similar to for Sitala-Mata, but this is for Piplaj-Mata, the special Goddess of the Rawat people. Near that again, a stone had to be marked with red *sindur* and paid respect. This was the Bhaironji of Piplaj-Mata.

Next, the procession made a wide circle round the back of the village, in the fringe of the dry jungle, stopping to worship at four more Bhaironjis, which were simply stones, indistinguishable from many others unless one looked closely, to find faint stains of former offerings of dye and melted butter. While he squatted barefoot before each of these, a young unmarried girl cousin laid her hand on his head and cried out: "Be thou blessed with many grandchildren"! As she was a mischievous and irreverent girl, she spoiled the solemnity of the event by adding an obscenity, in an audible aside, after each invocation. A sixth Bhaironji stone was found, with some difficulty, buried under the dust of the path leading to the door of the *paul*. It was cleared, and washed with water, and then worshipped. The next pause was at the big square stone sitting place, or *hathai*, outside the *paul*. Here again an inconspicuous stone, which had clearly been disregarded for months if not years, was identified and honoured. This was called *Ajipaul*.

The final act of worship that evening was called *dori napna*. The *dori* was the local dialect name for the heap of dry animal manure, a separate one for each household, which was laboriously gathered throughout the year, and on whose abundance would depend the richness of the yield from their fields. Here the groom squatted

before the dung-heap, symbolically "measured" it with a cubit's length of rope, and then groped underneath the dry manure to retrieve an iron key which had been hidden there; and finally saluted and made offerings to the *dori*.

When he returned to the village four days later with his new bride, a similar procession took place, both of them paying homage side by side to these various shrines This time, however, the *dori* was omitted, and they went to the door of the paul, where they were ceremonially greeted and given the sacred forehead-mark (tilak) by the bridegroom's mother. They then went first not to his own house, but to that one which had been built first of all by Suja Singh, the founder of the hamlet.[4] There, they worshipped a small image of Ganga-Mata, which had been Sujaji's, and next gave their respect to a small first-floor room, or *meri* (the only one of its kind here) in which was kept a stone image representing Chaut-Mata. Lastly, they went into the bridegroom's house, where a gaudily coloured lithograph of Ganesh was plastered to one wall, and worshipped him

Two things were particularly striking to the writer in studying these ceremonies. First, the completeness with which the hamlet was protected, as if by divine sentries, at every approach; and second the vagueness attaching to these same protectors. Literally no one in Sujarupa could tell him clearly who they all were. About Bhaironji, for example, who is worshipped in many parts of India as the terrible, the wrathful aspect of Shiva, all they knew was that he was a God, but not a great God; he was rather the lieutenant of the others, and especially of the Goddess. He was known to have two forms, Black and White. They differed in that the former liked blood sacrifices, the latter only sweet things. One old man said that many years ago Black Bhaironji lived in these parts. He was a tall, powerful black man, like a negro; and he was notorious for making free with men's wives. That is why people wear his image on their breasts, he said, in order that this misfortune should not come to them. Everyone did however associate this god with anger. Thus, when a furious, screaming quarrel broke out in one household, one of a group of men talking with the writer, remarked "There, Bhaironji is "playing"! and everyone laughed.

As to the others, they said: "It is just a God", or, of Chauth-Mata: "She is a Goddess, you know, just like the others: they have so many names, but they are all one."

Usually, they referred one to the *dholi* once again: he was the man who knew these things. But he was able to add very little, except on the score of Piplaj-Mata, the *Kul-Devi* or special Goddess

of the Rawats. Her chief temple was in a glen not many miles away, and there, many years ago, the Rawats used to appease her with the sacrifice of a first-born son. According to the legend, it was just eleven generations ago that a youth of fifteen years had been promised to the Goddess as a sacrifice. He was a handsome boy, and excelled in playing the drum, of which he was very fond. When he was taken to the temple, he asked only that he be permitted to play in honour of the Mataji, before he was decapitated and his head offered up in the customary way. He played to such effect that the Goddess spoke through her *bhopa* and renounced her taste for human sacrifice. Ever since, she has been offered a male water-buffalo instead. In the years before the pacification of these hills, when the Rawats lived chiefly by fighting and looting the settled villagers of the plains of adjacent Mewar and Marwar, they used to rely on the supernatural aid of Piplaj-Mata on their marauding expeditions, and when they returned successfully, they would sacrifice many buffaloes to her, and then have great feasts—because in those days they did not have any scruples about eating buffalo meat, or even beef in a lean year. "Things are different now," said the Dholi: "They are all becoming Brahmans now. That *bhopa* of Piplaj-Mata even goes about saying that they should not take life, they should offer her only sweet-meats. But still, when they want her help in an important matter, they go secretly to that temple and kill a young buffalo or a black he-goat in her name."

VENERATION OF ANCESTORS

In Sujarupa, the highest regard is paid to the memory of its founder, Suja Singh. Stories about him are already acquiring a legendary character, but it is clear that he enjoyed a wealth and renown greater than that of any of the present-day Rawat villagers for many miles around. Thus, when he gave a great feast after performing the pilgrimage to the Ganges, to scatter his father's ashes on its waters, his guests were numbered in hundreds, and even included the Rao of Deogarh, one of the senior nobles of Mewar, and two lesser Rajput Thakurs, each of whom was housed for the occasion in a special marquee. It was he who built the first house, and the *meri* in which the goddess-image stands, and also the *dhuni* or altar, which stands in the centre of the hemlet : and it is here that he is remembered with worship. Every morning Hira Singh, who lives in the cottage which was Sujaji's, throws out a handful of grain in the direction of the *dhuni*, for the pigeons to eat, and he "remembers the name of Sujaji" as he does so. On special occasions,

such as on embarking on the negotiations for a betrothal, or a purchase of land, or a lawsuit, any householder of the village may come and light a fire on the *dhuni* offering *Hom* (usually an oblation of melted butter, and chips of coconut) and asking Sujaji to let his errand prosper[6]

No other of the parents and grandparents of the present generation receives similar veneration: the writer made repeated inquiries on this point. There does however exist a vestigial custom which indicates that the practice of ancestor-worship may once have been more general. This is the wearing of a small silver medallion on a string round the neck, by both men and women, but more commonly the latter. The medallion represents a warlike figure, and is described as a *devta*, a godling. Originally these were bought and worn in memory of some member of the family, usually father or mother, and they are still bought from the goldsmiths of the larger villages for this purpose: sometimes they commemorate the death of a son. "*Devta* vegia", they say. "He became a golding," which is one way of saying that he died. These medallions are handed down from mother to daughter, until the occasion of their origin is forgotten. The writer was not present in Sujarupa in the month of Bhadwe (August-September) to observe whether Sujarupa families observed the orthodox Hindu custom of giving *Shraddha* feasts in honour of the dead; certainly none of them mentioned this practice. when he asked them about the worship of one's ancestors.

OTHER GODS.

The names of many of the principle gods of the Hindu pantheon were known to these villagers, especially to those of them who had been out in the world, serving in the army, or working in the mills at country towns like Beawar and Pali, or the distant city of Ahmedabad. In practice, however there were only three outlying temples which concerned them in their everyday living. These were the temple on top of Goram peak, behind which the sun set all the year round; the Ram-Devji temple in Miala village, four miles to the west across the jungle; and the temple of Mahadev in the hamlet of Dadalia, some seven miles to the north-west. The last of these had acquired a recent fame, although there were legends to link the natural spring there with a miracle performed by Lord Shiva. In accordance with this legend, it was believed that the waters which issued from this spring were those of the Ganges itself; but it was only in the life-time of the holy man now living there that the place had acquired a more than local reputation. He had spent

some 40,000 rupees, contributed by his followers, in building rest-houses, gardens, and cemented bathing pools where male and female pilgrims might bathe in the sacred waters in decent privacy, and now people came from many miles around, especially at the time of the two annual Shivratris, the festivals peculiar to Shiva.

Although everyone mentioned Dadalia with pride, as a show-place of this countryside, by no means all the adults in the village had ever been to see it. The same was true of the temple on top of Goram hill, which could be clearly seen. Often, first thing in the morning, after saluting the sun and pronouncing one of the names of God, men would turn towards that temple, now glowing in the level rays of dawn, and raise their hands in salute also to it; and on sacred occasions among the other cheers that were put up, would be included *"Goram Nathji ki Jai !"*. But whereas everyone knew that the objects of worship in Dadalia were the holy Ganges, and Mahadev (splendid but rather remote God of the high Hindus), even this much was not known about Goram-Nath. Some said he was a holy man who had been buried alive in the heart of that hill; and when the railway engineers had tunnelled through it, they had seen him there, with their spyglasses, as he sat in contemplation. Others said it was a demon, others some kind of God. but all were agreed that he watched over the twelve villages, and their hamlets, which lay in the valley on this side of the hill. In fact, the writer found on visiting it, it was a small temple of Mahadev, tended by a priest who lived on the other, or Marwar side of the range.

This was not the case with Ram Devji. Fragments of his story were known even to the children, and the women and girls all learned the songs which described his miraculous career. The annual *mela* at his temple in Miala is attended by tens of thousands of pilgrims drawn from many other groups besides the Rawats—but chiefly from the lower castes. He appeals to the Rawats because he was himself born into a Rajput family, a family of small farmers like themselves, and every incident of his life takes place in a familiar setting. Accordingly, in time of trouble there are many who turn to him instead of to the Danaji for help. The priests at the Ram-Devji temple do not become possessed, as do *bhopas*, but they have other methods of diagnosing the effects of attack by witch or fiend, and they have magical remedies, which are effective because of the power of their God. It is profoundly re-assuring for an anxious parent, or a sick man, to have Ram-Devji's assurance that all will be well.

SUPERNATURAL BELIEFS

There were many comparatively trivial superstitious current in Sujarupa, whose observance was not strictly observed. These seemed to be most current among those who had travelled abroad in India : they used to retail them to the others in the evenings how it was inauspicious to shave on a Tuesday, or travel on a Wednesday (but few people in the village kept count of the days of the week any way), and how it was unlucky to meet a widow-woman in your path, or a women carrying an empty water-pot : but to meet a married woman carrying water brought good luck. These and others like them, were learned from contact with Hindus of other castes.

More serious attention was paid to another class of omens, derived from the wild life of the jungle. When a man set out on an errand, if he heard partridges call on his left, he was re-assured, but if one called on his right, and the call was heard three times, he would be so surely convinced of ill omen that he would come home and renounce his business for that day. There were several other such signs, relating to other birds, and to snakes At night, if a jackal was heard to call three times from the burning-ghat, it meant that there would be a death soon in the village. There were however three types of superstitious fear which particularly concern them. These are the fear of evil spirits, of witches, and of devilish charms which can be used to kill one's enemies.

Evil spirits are of several kinds, the two commonest and most dreaded being the ghosts of men who have died violently, or by a sudden accident, "before their time" (called *bhut*), and the female ghost, with a hideous face, eyes in her breast and feet which point backwards at the ankle (called *churail*). The latter are the ghosts of women who have died in childbirth. *Bhuts* are encountered most commonly at the burning-ghat, or else at the spot where they were killed : their haunting is most intense for a span of twelve years, and then continues with less severity for another span. Many illnesses are due to the anger of such ghosts, and they must be appeased before the victim can recover.

When women or especially small children are sick (and there is a high death rate among children in these villages ; in recent generations in Sujarupa, forty per cent of children have died before the age of five) the cause is very commonly ascribed to the action of a *dakan* or witch. There is believed to be one such witch in every village, and sometimes more than one. No woman ever willingly submits to the allegation ; indeed, "witch" and "whore" are the two most

insulting epithets, to be used only in the height of a very angry quarrel (and invariably so used). In spite of this, the belief is so strong that a whole delusionary system has been built around it—about how one witch seduces another woman into going the same way ; how they can take the form of a cat at will ; how they go out on Saturday night to consort with other witches, stripping naked and ridding on hyenas backs while they shriek in the dark ; and how destructive is their baleful glance.

The psychological motives which give rise to such powerful projections of hostility and aggression are an interesting study in themselves. The whole question is attended with great secrecy, out of fear of the power of the witch. It was with difficulty that the writer found out that his nearest neighbour in the hamlet, an old woman called Dhapu, was a supposed witch, blamed for numerous sicknesses, and for the death of several children. After he had left, in December 1950, another young woman fell sick, and becoming "possessed" in a form of hysterical dissociation, announced that the possessing agent was this old witch, who was determined to consume her liver. At this the relatives of this girl set upon Dhapu, intending to beat her until she admitted her guilt and promised to leave the girl alone : but they beat her two hard, and the old woman died. This gave rise to a bitter quarrel between their family and that of Dhapu, who called in the police ; but no one denied the propriety of their action. It was only regretted that she had, most inconveniently, died of it.

Death-dealing magic is different again. It works by means of charms, which have to be made effective by enlisting supernatural aid. This may be done by sitting all night at the burning-ghat (which few would dare to do) or by sitting in the dark near the Hanuman shrine, repeating the charm over and over (the writer once surprised a villager called Nathu Singh in this act). The secret of these charms can be bought, at a high price ; but more usually people pay their owners to direct them against someone whom they specify. There are certain celebrated "knowing men" (*janne wale*) who are known to possess the antidotes to such charms ; and no doubt they can also exercise them, but they never boast of this, as it would make them most unpopular. Whereas in the case of witch craft, it is always one particular witch who is suspected, and either bought off (for example, by killing a black goat and exposing its head and entrails in a broken pot, at night, at a spot where three paths meet) or threatened with death if she will not desist, in this matter of charms the hostile agent is usually left unspecified, and the victim concerns him-

self only with undoing the effect of this particular charm.

II. DELWARA.

The village of Delwara lies in a valley 18 miles north of the city Udaipur, *the former capital of the State of that name.* Twelve miles further down this valley lies the town of Nathdwara, a pilgrimage centre celebrated for its possession of the image of Sri Nathji, a tall, dramatic figure executed in black stone. This image was once in a temple in Mathura, but it was sent to Udaipur in the sixteenth century for fear that it should be vandalised by the Moghul armies. It is housed in a vast Vaishnavi temple (Sri Nathji being one of the forms of Vishnu) whose high priest is also the ruler and landlord of the rich little town. Four miles to the south of Delwara there is another pilgrimage centre, in the village of Eklingji. Here, in a temple built in the fifteenth century, is a famous *lingam*, a black phallic stone representing Shiva, which has been worshipped by the Hindus of Udaipur since the 12th century, if not before.

The tradition is still maintained that the rulers of Udaipur (Rajputs of the Sheshodia clan, who trace their succession in an unbroken line to the ninth century) are really only the viziers of the God Shiva, who, as represented by this black *lingam*, is the real Rana of Udaipur The high priest of this temple is chosen from among a small number of ascetics who have renounced their caste and all their worldly possessions in order to serve there. He is not wealthy, as is the priest of Sri Nathji, but he has the honour of being the Maharana's personal Guru, and of being the only man in the land who is entitled by right to sit at a higher level than he.

Delwara is a larger village than most, having a population (in February 1951) of 2,424 persons, in 597 households. A total of 39 different castes are representend, but of these only twelve are numerically important. These are as follows :—

Banias (merchants) ...	578
Moselems (servants & artisans) ...	228
Yadows (stonemasons) ...	205
Daroga formerly servants of the Ruler, now finding work as tailors, shop-keepers) ...	183
Bhil (labourers) ...	157
Balai (leather-workers) ...	154
Bhoi (market gardeners) ...	111
Khatik (butchers, labourers) ...	106
Brahmans (priests) ...	85
Nai (barbers, servants) ...	79

Kumbar (potters)	...	78
Rajputs (landlords)	...	63

Unlike Sujarpa, this village has been established for centuries. One of its temples bears an inscription dated Samwat 411 (1355 A. D.). There is a tradition that in very early times there existed a series Jain temples all the way from the ruined village of Nagda, on the other side of Eklingji, to Delwara. In the middle ages, the authority of the nominal ruler of Udaipur over his nobles was a precarious one. For several generations, the fortress-palace of Delwara, and the surrounding country was held by a Rathor Rajput family from the rival state of Jodhpur: to this day there exists near the village burning-ghat a memorial to the last Rathor ruler, dated Samwat 1642 (1585 A. D.). Since that date the village and the surrounding estate which includes sixty other villages have been ruled by a family of Jhala Rajputs, adherents of the Maharana of Udaipur.

The size and importance of the village derive from its being the seat of government of this Tikhana, or earldom. The village is dominated physically by a towering whitewashed palace, built on a high rock, and surrounded by battlements. Here lives the Raj Rana of Delwara, and here until 1949 was the judicial and administrative centre of the whole region. The Ruler had a personal staff of over 200 retainers, and there were courts, and a prison, and the offices of the revenue collectors within its walls. The police were under his authority, and he could command scores of Rajput warriors to attend him in case of need. The Ruler dominated the social and economic life of the village as well : the merchants sought his approval before opening a new shop or building a house, and their sons went formally to pay him their respects and to ask for his patronage. Indeed there was scarcely a single family which did not hold some minor office or contract from the Raj Rana. The prosperity of the little bazaar, and the preponderance in numbers of the merchant caste were due to the constant coming and going of tenants and litigants.

All this has abruptly changed since, soon after India became independent, the central government took over the civil administration from the former quasi-feudal Rajput rulers. In order to emphasise the change, they removed the magistrate's court and the administrative offices to a town some twenty miles distant. Now, the palace stands empty and deserted. Most of the retainers have been discharged. The Ruler sits at a high window looking over the village, playing chess with his few remaining attendants and speculating over

the next turn of the wheel. In the village itself, people have not yet got used to the sudden reversal. The older men regret it, and take every opportunity of grumbling about the injustices and corruption of the new regime, but the young men feel liberated and hopeful of finding new openings for their personal advancement elsewhere. Many have already left home to take up work in government service —which is the ambition of almost every boy who matriculates in the village school, As yet, however, the village community has not crystallized its new rank order, to take the place of the clearly cut hierarchy of posts of authority under the Raj Rana, which have dominated social life for so many generations. Encouraged by the Congress government, the village council has assumed certain responsibilities, in dealing with disputes and brawls, and matters concerning communal welfare ; but so far it has not acquired much prestige, so that little respect is paid to its members or to its decisions. In this transition period, two alignments are emerging, and competing for the ascendancy in village affairs. These may be described as a party relying on its wealth, against another party relying on its political influence, each trying as get on top.

The writer and his wife came to stay in Delwara at the end of January 1951, and remained there with brief interruptions until November of that year. They were given accommodation in an outlying part of the Ruler's palace, and the writer secured a room in the centre of the bazaar, where he conducted a medical clinic, and talked with his informants daily. He found that in this more sophisticated setting it was a much slower business than in Sujarupa to break through the cloud of distrust and suspicion with which the villagers surrounded him. Gradually, however, they decided that there was nothing to fear from him, and became generous in inviting him to take part in their festivals and in all the ceremonies of their daily life

In a community containing so many distinct sub-groups there was a marked diversity of patterns of religious observation ; and these in turn were found to be graded in social prestige, just as Church precedes Chapel, and both are counted superior to the Missioner's marquee.

TEMPLE WORSHIP.

Delwara was rich in temples. There were three particularly spacious Jain temples, subsidised by the merchants (all but three families of whom belonged to that sect) containing numerous marble images of the Tirthankars, the deified Jain saints. There was also

one small Jain temple peculiar to their Digambar sub-division (whose images are represented in the nude, and whose ascetics discard all clothing). Each of these temples had a paid caretaker, whose duty it was to bathe the idols, wash out the temple, and offer worship there morning and evening. They were frequented more by women than by men, and there were few families who visited them with any regularity.

There were 35 temples to various Hindu Gods, each with its regular attendant. Many of these were reserved for one or other caste, having been built by subscription by members of that caste—the goldsmiths had a Vishnu temple, the potters a Thakurji, the Audich Brahmins a Charbhujaji temple. There were others also, endowed as a puplic benefaction, which anyone except the untouchable castes' the sweepers and leather-workers and butchers might attend. There were however there such temples which were more frequented than all the rest, namely, the Charbhuja temple in the main bazaar, the Laxmi Narain temple near the village bathing-well, and a Hanuman temple in the gardens belonging to the palace. All of these had been endowed by previous Rulers of Delwara.

It was noticeable that each of these three temples had certain devotees who were especially assiduous in promoting evenings of hymn-singing, and mid-night worship (often attended with a clamour of ringing bells, and drums and exploding fire-crackers). One of the most ardent at the Hanuman temple was a Jain merchant who had risen from penury to own a very flourishing shop, and who believed his success was due to Hanuman's divine intervention. Most, however, were members of the poorest castes—washermen, darogas, barbers or artisans of one trade or another. One obscure little temple near the cross roads of the bazaar was celebrated because it was kept up by a prosperous sweetmeat seller. On the last day of each month, he wou'd decorate the interior of this temple with flowers and offerings of fruit and sweets, and summon a harmonium player to lead the singing of hymns for some hours. Everyone who attended was given a share of the offerings to the God, so this was a popular occasion, especially among the children.

At the Charbhuja temple, from time to time a Brahmin was employed, by the gift of one of the more prosperous citizens, to sit and read *Kattha*, that is, passages from a Hindi translation of one of the Sanskrit scriptures, such as the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. The reading and expounding of these texts was still, here in Delwara, the chief means by which ordinary villagers learned the basic mythology of Hinduism : elsewhere in India, this function has largely been

taken over by the popular cinema.

There were temples also in the palace, one in the secluded women's quarters, one where the Ruler attended daily for prayers (to Ranchorji, a Vishnu incarnation) and one in the outer courtyard (to Chalak-Raiji, again a form of Vishnu). The dowager Rani, grandmother of the present Raj Rana lived in a special house on the other side of the village, and she had had built an ornate little temple to Baikunt Laxmi Nath (Vaishnavi) at which any but the lowest castes might worship. Each of these temples had a Brahman priest who performed the offices, made *arti* (the offering of flame) and repeated Sanskrit verses before the God each morning and evening.

GODDESS WORSHIP.

The Mother-Goddess, Mataji, or Devi, who appears in so many forms, and with so many different names, is revered by every caste in Delwara, in differing degree. She is worshipped most ardently by the Rajputs and by those other castes which are beginning to assume that title, and by the farmers. Each Rajput clan has one form of the Goddess who is their *kul-devi*. In the case of the Jhalas, this is Ad-Mataji, of whom there is a fine image in a temple high up in the palace. There are three other Mataji temples in the village ; a very modest one, to Piplaj-Mata, where low-caste labourers, washermen and Bhils attend, another a small white-washed shrine on top of a hill, with an image of Sitala-Mata. All the women of the village dress in their best clothes on the festival of Sitala-Mata and go in procession to worship at this temple. They do the same sometimes later in the year, particularly if there is an out-break of smallpox, or if (as happened in 1951) there comes a succession of particularly hot days. The name Sitala means "the Cool One", and is a euphemism for the fierce heat of her influence, which is reflected in the high fever of small-pox : and the object of worshipping her is to cool her wrath with sweet offerings, while the image is bathed with cold water.

There is an interesting contrast between the Ad-Mata and Sitala-Mata temples on the one hand, and those of Piplaj and Vijayshan Mata on the other. The former are attended by Brahmin priests, and their offerings are of flowers and sweets : although during the nine nights of the annual Navratri festival, goats or sometimes a buffalo, will be sacrificed to Ad-Mata, in the courtyard outside her temple. Both of these Goddesses are worshipped by members of all castes. It is a different matter with Vijayshan and Piplaj Matas. They are attended by *bhopas* (in both cases, the *bhopas* are Bhils, who rank just above the untouchables in the social scale) who become possess-

ed by the spirit of the Goddess, and speak oracles and effect cures by virtue of her power. Both delight in offerings of goats and of *daru*, the strong countrymade liquor. When a worshipper presents these offerings, the *bhopa* emerges from the little shrine and stands, still quivering with the possession, on the level platform before it. A young Rajput called Prithvi Singh draws his sword, and cuts off the head of the goat with one clean stroke. As the headless animal stands for one moment, before it falls, the blood which spurts from its severed carotid arteries is caught in a brass cup, held by an attendant of the *bhopa*, who adds some of the *daru* and then carries it up to him, and he drinks the warm mixture in the person of the Goddess. Later, when he has emerged from his trance, he and the other worshippers will sit round a log fire and finish off the rest of the liquor, with scraps of roasted goat's liver for an appetiser. In all three villages, the writer found, when people sit to drink *daru* together, whether on a sacred or a secular occasion, the first taste is taken with the invocation : "Jai Mahaji !", and sometimes a few drops are spilled on the ground as a libation.

BHAIRONJI WORSHIP.

The Mata shrines occupy an intermediate position between the High Gods of orthodox Hinduism and the lesser Gods, which are felt to be easier of access, and more intimately related to the everyday concerns of the poor people. In Delwara, the generic term which covers all these little gods is Bhaironji, or Bheruji. They are thus identified with the Hindu concept of the destructive aspect of Shiva (Bhairava) : but the ordinary village worshipper knows nothing of this. To him, each such God is an individual, often known by a special name, like Reglia-Bheruji, or Kotcheta Bheru ; or he is identified with the caste-group which he serves, and among whose houses his stone is set, as the Yadows' Bheru, the Khatiks' Bheru, and so on. Officially, the three top castes have no Bheruji ; but this rule has its exceptions. There is one, whose sacred stone is among the ruins of what was said to have been an ancient Jain temple, and he has a Jain shop-keeper as his *bhopa*. The possession, and the answering of people's personal problems is the same, but this Bhaironji does not accept blood sacrifices.

Bhaironjis occur in two forms, either alone or in association with a Goddess or with an image of one of the forms of Vishnu. If the latter is the case, blood sacrifices will not be offered ; if the former, they will. Where Bhaironji occurs alone, he usually prefers such sacrifices.

All of these Bhaironjis have their regular *bhopa*, sometimes more than one There is no formality about the selection of those who will become *bhopas* : the spirit moves them, and that is all. Sometimes an interval will elapse after the death of a *bhopa* before his successor becomes possessed, either at that same shrine or it may be at another one, and announces that such-and-such a Bhaironji has come to him. The *bhopas* are not, however, the only ones to become possessed : not uncommonly a man may consult the Bhaironji to help him over an illness or other trouble believed to be due to magical causes, and himself become possessed in the process When this happens, and is followed by his recovery, he may elect to adopt that Bhaironji as his special protector. In order to do this, he provides a generous offering of sweetmeats, and may hire musicians to play before the shrine during a late night session of worship, in the course of which the *bhopa* gives him ring consisting of three turns of flattened copper wire. This is called *gor*, is worn on the fourth finger of the right hand, and is a sign that the wearer is committed to the service of his protector. His service is a nominal one, but it remains an obligation for the rest of his life.

RADAJI.

In every part of India it is usual to find a god which protects the fields and the crops. Here in Delwara, every family holding (or several adjacent plots, which once belonged to a single family) has such a god. He is represented by an inconspicuous stone, daubed with red paste and referred to as Radaji. These gods are believed to dwell in and watch over that particular patch of land. One, more imposing than the rest, consists of a stone raised up on a platform, with a cement-finished canopy over it : this is the Radaji which guards the approaches to the village itself, and this is the only local one to possess a *bhopa* ; but he seldom has occasion to become possessed.

People had no very clear notion of what the Radaji was like, but thought of him as being in appearance rugged and uncouth, a peasant like themselves. One young farmer described a dream in which he was going through the jungle at night to some distant fields, and was set upon by a dark, half-naked man : they wrestled and belaboured each other for a while, then the other desisted, and let him go on his way. He rather thought this must have been a Radaji which thought his spirit was trespassing, and this belief was confirmed next day when he learned that a neighbour of his had been bitten by a snake during the night, near the place of his dream. "You see", he said ; "I wrestled with the Radaji, but it is he who has got hurt."

In so saying, he conformed with the very general belief that this god can take the form of snake most commonly a cobra and will bite any who come to the fields to steal. When this is believed to have happened, the victim turns to a man who knows the appropriate charms. The exorcist will have the patient bound hand and foot, and then will speak his charm, which has the effect of causing the god to come and possess the victim, speaking through his mouth. The god's first impulse is to attack and kill the exorcist, and hence the precaution of tying him up : after a parley, he is persuaded to leave him alone or sometimes he is not so persuaded, and the patient dies.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP.

The spirits of a family's ancestors are remembered in most Delwara homes, and in all those of the upper castes. During the first half month of Bhadwe month, *shraddha* feasts were held in every wealthy house, on the day of corresponding to the death of a father, grandfather or great-grandfather, and many guests were invited to take part. In the proper homes, a ceremony, offering incense, flowers and sweet food in the name of the dead was customary : if a silver-medallion *devta* were possessed, it would be put in a special place and worshipped at this time. All this was accepted Brahmanical Practice, but the same could not be said of another phenomenon, which was found in several households, both of the merchants and of lower castes, though never among Brahmans or Rajputs : this was the presence of a *purbaj*, or ghost of a recently deceased head of the family, who manifested himself by "possessing" a surviving member, commonly his own widow, and so having a continuing authoritative say in the conduct of family affairs. Usually the *purbaj* was believed to hount the house, in the form of a cobra. Accordingly, if there were a *purbaj* in a family, they would never kill a snake, but rather put out a saucer of milk if one were seen, because this *purbaj* was believed to protect the household in the same way as the Radaji did his fields.[6]

The family of the Ruler made a practice of building monuments, to perpetuate the memory of their predecessors. This was always done at an interval after the death of the Raj Rana who was to be thus honoured, because it was customary for this memorial to be built during the rule of the grandson, and not that of the son—a reflection of the rivalry and tension underlying the strict paternal discipline of the Rajput family. Memorials were also built to celebrate the performance of *sati*. There were three such in the village

burning-ghat, the best preserved being one of the late 18th century. This was, unusually, an instance occurring in the Bania caste : a girl of the Bokriya lineage had been betrothed to a Mandawat boy, who died before their marriage took place. Although still a virgin, and unmarried, she elected to burn with him, and hence the sacrifice was held doubly honourable. To this day, young people of both these lineages come to this memorial to offer worship, before and after their wedding ceremonies.

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

One of the commonest explanations of sickness in Delwara is that the sufferer has been "struck", by a witch, a ghost, or some form of demon. It is not unusual for a patient who is sickening—it may be for typhoid, of for a bout of malaria—to shake convulsively and pass for some minutes into a state of dissociation, similar to that of the *bhopa*, or of the person who is visited by a *purbaj*. While in this state they may speak, voicing their own fear, that they have offended one or other of these supernatural agencies : or they may simply quiver and grunt, and their relatives will form their own conclusions, or call in a "knowing man", or a *bhopa* to establish the diagnosis. Here again it is usually women who are affected by witches (though by no means always : one man described how a woman of the village met him in a lonely place and urged him to have sex with her ; after he had refused, and abused her, he went home and later experienced an attack of dysentery—he was sure that she must have been a witch and this was the result of her anger), and ghosts usually attack men. Such sicknesses are regarded as dangerous only if one has aroused the especial hatred of the supernatural agent Ordinarily, they can be qu ite easily apeased with a gift. The gift would generally take the form of an offering of food, which would be nominally given to the spirit, but actually shared by the diviner and the family concerned. Sometimes, in the case of witchcraft, it might take the form of fine clothes, to be passed over the head of the patient, symbolically offered to the witch and then set aside. The patient could expect to inherit these same clothes soon after her recovery ; and this obvious "secondary gain" as it is termed in psychiatry, may well have persuaded some young wives to be readily prone to such attacks. It was the case that two of the most respected witch-diviners in the village used at times to conclude that there was in fact no witch at work : and then would slap the girl smartly on the cheeks. This seldom failed to bring them promptly out of their trainee.

Death-dealing magics were also mentioned, though infrequen-

tly. Much more common was reference to the extra-ordinary, and destructive, magical powers of the primitive tribesmen, the "wild" Bhils who lived in the hill jungles to the South-west of Delwara, and especially to their *sikotri*, which were variously described as very potent witches, and as a sort of familiar which went abroad to do their will. It was regarded as a dangerous undertaking to attempt to cure anyone suspected of being a victim of this magic, for fear that it should overpower and destroy the exorcist as well: but in fact, though everyone talked of it, few had ever known an actual case, other than those which had ended in the victim's death and had afterwards been ascribed to the action of a *sikotri*. The Bhils were credited with other magics beside the killing one.' Through the agency of their familiars they were supposed to be able to know of events happening at a great distance, and to be able to blight a tree as if by a shaft of lightening, and to cause an enemy's house to rattle and shake as if in an earthquake. It was these tales, as well as his glimpses of the boisterous exuberance of Bhil popular ceremonies, such as their dances, and their folk-opera, which stimulated the writer to move into their country in order to learn more about their peculiar way of life.

TRAVELLING HOLY MEN.

In Sujarupa, the only holy men who commanded the villagers' reverence and attention were those, often of their own caste, who had risen to become Gurus in their respective devotional *panths*; and most of these were at the same time farmers or artisans in their ordinary daily life. In Delwara, however, it was different. Most of the Bania families (the most numerous as well as the richest group) belonged to that section of Jainism which attaches special importance to reverencing their wandering holy men, ascetics who have renounced home and family and all possessions, who live entirely on charity. The Banias maintained three spacious *noheras*, or courtyards with rooms in which these ascetics might stay. Their order enjoins that for eight months of each year they must keep travelling, pausing in any one village for a few days only. In the four months of the rainy season, on the other hand, they are expected to remain in one place. Where-ever they stop, they preach their religion, and lead the Jain community in prayer and worship. In Delwara, there were nearly always one or two women "saints" of this order in temporary residence, and less commonly men.

These ascetics are treated with an extreme degree of reverence. They are in fact regarded as if they were already partaking of divi-

nity. It is believed that by their complete renunciation of the world and devotion to spiritual concerns they earn the reward of being released from the necessity of re-incarnation. Accordingly, when one of the saints dies (as happened during the writer's stay in Delwara) the occasion is considered as one for rejoicing. The corpse is placed in a sitting position in a gaily decorated palanquin and carried at the head of a procession, everyone wearing their brightest clothes, singing cheerful songs, and with bands playing. At the burning-ghat the corpse's lap is filled with coconuts, incense and other offerings before the funeral pyre is lit, to the singing of triumphant hymns.

The Brahmin caste also has a guest-house for holy men, called a *dharamshala*, and there are two other *dharamshalas* in the village, one provided by the gift of the dowager Rani, another, called Ram-dwara (God's dwelling) a small hut built by low-caste villagers themselves. All of these were visited periodically by passing holy men, of a great variety of different Hindu sects, and these would be entertained with gifts of food by some of the village families. Some of these had been before, like one Govind-guru, a strange ecstatic character who passed the greater part of his day in a trance-like state of contemplation waking up at dawn and dusk to worship effusively before a framed lithograph of Sri Krishna as a cow-herd. He already had many followers in the village, who vied with each other in attending to him: Others were newcomers, who might never pass this way again, and they were generally treated with purely formal expressions of respect. The villagers were well aware that there are many fraudulent *saddhus* on the roads, and tended to suspend judgement as to the merits of these strangers though their bias was always in favour of believing them not only genuine, but possessed of supernatural gifts by virtue of their holiness. These Hindu *saddhus* rarely imparted any instruction. They might bestow a blessing, or promote an evening's worship to the God of their especial devotion : but generally both they and their hosts felt that a sufficient reward was given in the merit which accrued to anyone whose hospitality they accepted.

In this category of respected teachers should also be included two remaining Brahmin heads of households (Mohan Lal, a school teacher, and Bhuri Lal, an astrologer) who still maintained the reputation for profound learning in the Vedas, and who still commanded the worshipful respect of their fellow-villagers, that once did all elder Brahmins. It was noticeable that their own religious life, as also that of other pious Brahmins who did not command such general

authority was conducted almost entirely in private and alone.

FORBIDDEN SECTS.

In Delwara, much more than in Sujarupa, the writer found it easy to obtain copious information (much of which was of doubtful validity) on the subject of the forms of *bhakti* which had the act of sexual intercourse as their central act of worship. The reason for this was that these sects were explicitly denounced as being obscene, indecent, and wholly opposed to the practice of true religion. In the past, the Rulers of Delwara had visited their practitioners with severe punishments, and had rewarded anyone who gave information of their *mandlis*. It was indeed noticeable that the members of the three highest castes took a certain delight in describing the full horrors of these cults, and especially of the two forms which were best known in this vicinity, the *kanchli-panth* and the *kunda-panth*. In the latter sect, not only were its meetings marked by ritual intercourse, but also and this one's high-caste informants found even more repellent—they were the occasion for a communal meal, in which members of all castes sat together and partook of food which for many was expressly prohibited by their caste rule : it was rumoured that they even ate beef on such occasions.

Apart from these hearsay accounts, the writer slowly learned some more precise details of the existence of these sects, which were most popular among the low-caste farming communities of the outlying villages : but which numbered also some of the rustic Rajput landlords among their adherents. In the whole of Delwara, only three persons were known to have been active members of such sects : but two others had secretly looked on at one of their gatherings. It was one of the latter, a young Rajput, who was the only Delwara informant to concede that the participants themselves regarded this as a form of religion. This attitude of understanding was however quite explicitly met within one nearby village, where the writer, talking with two or three of the elders before going to sleep in the open air, broached the subject of these *panths*. At once, the atmosphere became alert, tense and guarded. When they realised, however, that he did not proceed at once to abuse these practices, they relaxed and spoke of them in sympathetic terms, as the religion of some of the country folk. Still, none claimed any personal experience of the sects ; but next morning one of them, in showing the writer over the village Goddess-shrine indicated the flat platform before it and said : "This is where we had one of those *mandlis* last month—you know, that we were talking about last night."

III KHAJURIA.

The Bhil village of Khajuria was selected by the writer after two preliminary journeys through that part of Udaipur which is predominantly inhabited by tribespeople. This is the Western, mountainous part, known as Bhomat. It is divided by one particularly high range into two regions, the more northerly being known as Kotra Bhomat, the other as Kherwara Bhomat, after the two military posts where detachments of the Mewar Bhil Corps have been stationed for a hundred years, to help in keeping order in this unruly and inaccessible tract. The former, which is the more remote, is distinctly less "civilised." The Bhils there preserve more of their old customs and independence of the Hindu world, whereas those of Kherwara Bhomat have copied a number of Hindu prejudices, even to being ashamed of their own tribal designation (they like to refer to themselves as Minas, believing that that tribe has a higher social standing), and they are more law-abiding. These considerations prompted the writer to select a village in the Kotra area for his study.

Bhil villages, unlike those of the Hindus, are not a mass of close packed huts. On the contrary, each house stands at some distance from the next, sometimes as far as some two hundred yards off. The huts in this area are flimsily constructed, with walls of bamboo covered with the broad leaves of the indigenous stunted teak tree. They are situated strategically, on the top of a knoll, or on a slope with the jungle close behind. Bhils like to have a clear view over the approaches to their home.

These hill valleys have an average rainfall of 40 inches, nearly twice that of the plains of Udaipur, and the soil is rich. The Bhils are accustomed to raise a crop of maize during the rainy season, which is sufficient for their needs for the whole year. Some of them will also raise a hot weather crop of wheat, irrigating their fields by diverting water from the streams. Traditionally, the mainstay of their economy was the grazing of cattle in their grassy hillsides, with hunting (and occasional banditry) as an additional source of income. During the last 15 years, communications with the railway line in the plain of Sirohi, 40 miles to the West, have been slowly developing : business men from the outside world realised that there was a profitable market in the produce in which these jungles were potentially rich—bamboo, wax, and charcoal. Using at first camel-trains, and in very recent years ex-army trucks as well, they have penetrated into Kotra Bhomat, with such effect that charcoal-cutters have

already depleted many of the most readily accessible forests, and game has become scarcer than before.

It seems evident that this process will continue. The present rudimentary track from the plains, which is partly obliterated after every heavy rainfall, will be replaced by a firm road : commerce and intercourse with the sophisticated world will increase, and the old Bhil customs will no doubt gradually alter as a result. As yet, however, although this area has been under the rule of its military governor for a century, and before that was nominally ruled by the small Rajas whose fortresses are scattered throughout the territory—the Rajas incidentally are themselves of the Garasia community, although they too aspire to be regarded as full-blooded Rajputs—yet the Bhils have retained to a remarkable degree their old tribal customs and regulations.

The Bhils are found over a long streatch of country, whose northernmost point is Kotra Bhomat, the most southerly part being over 500 miles to the south-east, in Bombay Province; but they themselves are quite unawere of this, and have no sense of communal solidarity with all their fellow-Bhils. Their corporate sense is limited to the horizons of their own, and the adjacent valleys. Their most important social unit is the village, which may consist of from a dozen to a score of huts, straggling over the whole of a side-valley. Each such village has a *mukhi* or head-man, who represents the village in all its dealings with external authorities, and also in disputes with other villages. The latter is their more important function, because disputes, leading to mortal feuds, are a common occurrence in Bhil life. They occur over the theft of property or of cattle, and over adultery and elopement, which are not infrequent events. The injured party is recognised to have the right to defend his rights, with the bow and arrow which he usually carries, or with his sword or muzzle loading gun. Indeed, so long as his grievance has not been settled, by the *mukhi* of his village meeting the representatives of the offending person and coming to times for compensation, he is liable to make a murderous attack on his opponenent whenever they meet. The *mukhi* of every village has always got on his hands one or two such feuds which are still *ubo*, or "outstanding". He is also expected to be present at every corporate activity of the village community. In their weddings, for example, there is no religious ceremony, but the *mukhi* has to witness the event, and all the village neighbours expect to be invited to take part in the drinking and singing and dancing which accompany the event.

One or two things especially strike the attention of the visitor

on first coming to live among the Bhils. Their bearing and manners are noticeably more confident and carefree than those of the poor peasant of the plains. It is obvious that they regard themselves as their own masters : and they are always ready to give proof of this by defending themselves in an emergency with the weapons which seldom leave their hands. They are an exuberant people, unburdened with care for the future, ready to enjoy meal, or a carousal or a dance whenever the occasion offers. It is characteristic of them that every man carries a bamboo flute as well as a weapon at his side. When one walks through their jungles one can often hear the sound of a flute being idly played by a herdsman some where out of sight, or a woman's voice singing a song which may have been composed at a previous festival to commemorate a Bhil dacoit and his evasion of the soldiery, or may be one that she herself makes up, to describe how she was wooed and how she ran away with her young man.

LOCAL DEITIES.

The outsider will encounter his first experience of their religious life in the course of his walking through the jungles, because it is beside the forest paths, near a strikingly large tree, or a rock or waterfall that he will find some of their oldest shrines. These consist simply of a painted stone, set up on end, and sometimes honoured with a flimsy roof of sticks and leaves : they represent the Goddess of that little glen or slope of hill, and she must be worshipped if the hunting is to prosper. The traditional offering for these wayside Goddesses take the form of an earthenware figure of a horse, of bizarre and simplified design, which is made for them by the Hindu potters of the villages in the Sirohi plains. The shrine presents a mysterious appearance when one comes upon it suddenly, with a circle of twenty or thirty of these red baked-clay horses all standing, facing the central stone : it is as if one had burst in upon some secret gathering.

These Goddess-shrines are of great antiquity. They have no formal ritual, no festival, are worshipped only in order to ensure the success of hunting or other work in that part of the jungle with which they are associated. Sometimes one or other acquires a more widespread fame : there is one, for example, near the village of Sandmaria which is believed to be especially benevolent towards robbers. She is still worshipped by raiding parties before they set out on a cattle-lifting expedition, and again if they return successfully.

The other conspicuous type of shrine is found near the village itself, usually on top of a small hillock. This consist of a low wall, forming three sides of room. Exceptionally it may also be roofed.

over with leaves or tiles. At the back of the room is a low platform, on which are set a row of massive earthenware plaques, of a characteristic design, bearing the figures in relief of certian Hindu Gods and Goddesses. These plaques are made by the potters of one particular village called Molera, which lies on the fringe of the mountainous area, not far from the town of Nathdwara. The Bhils have to travel for three days, carrying these plaques on their backs, in order to bring them from their place of origin. This shrine is called a *devra*, a Hindi word, whereas the ordinary speech of the Bhils is a mixture of Marwari and Gujerati Not only the word, but also the gods, and the worship associated with them, are borrowed from the Hindi-speaking plains: indeed, the Bhils themselves refer to them as "the Gods from Mewar".

THE DEVALO.

After living among the Bhils for some time, one comes to appreciate that just as the *mukhi* is the significant person in the community for all the most important social interactions, so is another individual, known as the *devalo*, of equal importance in their dealings with the supernatural world. The *devalo* is their physician, and it is he who diagnoses the cause of any trouble in the house, whether an illness, a theft, or a loss. He does this by speaking his charms over a handful of maize, and then laying out the grains in a series of patterns—first in pairs, then in threes, fours, fives and so on up to nine. By the number of grains left over at each dealing-out he tells the nature and the source of the danger, which in most cases is ascribed to the magical wrath of a witch, a Goddess, a demon or in a few cases, to a deadly charm which an enemy has persuaded another *devalo* to launch against the patient.

The *devalo* is respected, if he acquires a good reputation for healing the sick, and he may be feared on account of his dangerous charms: but he is certainly not held in awe. On the contrary, when a Bhil has no need of his services, he tends rather to make fun of his *devalo*, saying that he has chosen the lazy life, just sitting over his grains, and mumbling charms and then collecting his reward, and others repeat the old taunt that when a *devalo* becomes strong in magic, he loses his phallic potency. This is very generally believed, in spite of their denial. When the writer remarked that certain *devalos* of his acquaintance had young children, his informants only grinned and said: "Yes but who knows who may have helped him out!"

The art of the *devalo* has to be learned from another practitioner. In some cases it may be handed down from father to son, but more

often the father refuses to instruct his own children, as there is room for only one active *devalo* in a village. Having learned the charms, and the techniques of divining, the pupil must then accompany his instructor to the village burning ghat on the last night of the month of Kartik (about October). On this night, ghosts are believed to return to earth. The *devalo* sits inside a *kar* or magic circle marked upon the ground, and converses with the ghosts. They may ask him for meat, or wine, or bread, and he comes prepared for this throwing his gifts on to the ground well clear of the *kar*, where he is inviolable. Finally an apparition more terrible than all the rest appears. This is the King of the Dead, called Babiro Joting-walo · and it is by virture of his unearthly powers that the *devalo's* charms acquire their potency. An apprentice cannot begin to practice with any hope of success until he has paid an experienced *devalo* a handsome sum in order to be initiated in this way. He dare not go alone, because without the protection of a potent charm, he would be destroyed by the ghosts.

An indication of the commoner magical scourges of the Bhil community can be gained from the following list of customary charges made by *devalos* for diagnosing a variety of afflictions :—

1. For ascertaining that there is no magical cause at work : one and a quarter *pali* (about a half-pint) of maize.
2. A God of the village *devra* ; 2 annas. (about two pence).
3. A ghost : 4 annas.
4. A lesser *Vir* (a house-protecting spirit) : 8 annas.
5. A Goddess : 20 annas (one and a quarter rupees).
6. A witch from the same village : Rs. 2/8.
7. A witch from another village : Rs. 4/- or more.
8. A powerful *Vir* : Rs. 5/-.

This does not exhaust the range of their diagnosis. An important omission is the case of afflicition by *Kamria-pat*, a Bhil household God : this was said to be one of the most dangerous, and consequently most expensive diagnosis to make. The *devalo*, unlike the *bhopas* did not hesitate in some cases to announce the patient's certain death : if a particular combination of grains emerged, nothing could save him. For this prognosis, however, he made no charge.

It will be appreciated that the *devalo*, although the possessor of certain magical skills, is not himself a religious figure, but simply an intermediary in cases where supernatural influences have complicated a man's life. It will be apparent also that the scale of his charges gives an indication of the relative importance of the various gods and demons in the Bhils' estimation.

DAKAN AND SIKOTRA.

In Delwara, the writer had been told two things about Bhil witchcraft : that their witches went by the name of *sikotri*, and that witches were so common that it had reached the point where a household did not feel safe unless they also possessed a witch to compete with all the others. Thus, it was said that when the emissaries from a Bhil girl's home went to the house of her future husband in order to arrange for the marriage, one of their questions would be : "Is there a watcher in the house ?" Only if this were answered in the affirmative would the betrothal be confirmed.

This proved to be only a little removed from the true facts. The Bhils, like the Rawats, considered the majority of illnesses afflicting women and children to be due to the action of a *dakan*, or witch : but they believed that every single woman, soon after she was married, was initiated into the arts of witchcraft. Consequently, they were ready to tolerate minor exhibitions of this nature without undue concern. Sometimes, however, the witch seemed to be of a stubborn and implacable nature, and the illnesses she brought about would not be curable. When an unfortunate woman got the reputation of being a really dangerous *dakan*, the *devalo* might consult her spirit, in her absence, to ask : "Is it your wish to be swung ?"

If the grains showed the answer to be in the affirmative, the woman was seized forcibly, and swung by the feet from a very high tree, while red peppers were bound as a poultice over her eyes. The swinging would go on for hours, or even in an extreme case day and night, until the woman confessed and promised to cease her witch's work. Such a dangerous witch was generally turned out by her husband, to return to her parents' home unless she found another man hardy enough to risk taking her as his wife. In one instance in the summer of 1950 a woman was accused by the *devalo* of being responsible for her husband's severe and prolonged illness. She was furious, and withstood "swinging" for three nights and two days on end before she confessed, but by this time the man had died, and her eldest son, in a rage at her supposed murder of his father, drew his sword and cut off her head.

It was not true that they were known as *sikotri*, except by non-Bhils. The *sikotra* was a very powerful magic, kept in many households, which defended that house against theft and all kinds of attack. It consisted of a Goddess, called *Melri* and her lieutenant, a male spirit called *Vir*. These were represented by two stones, often set into the wall which formed the base of the back of a hut. It was to

these agencies that the betrothal emissaries referred, when they asked: "Is there a Watcher ? (*rakhwali karne wali*)". The confusion was the more easily made because witches are believed to owe much of their power to the possession of charms which enable them also to send the *Vir* on their magical errands.

When a household possessed a guardian *sikotra*, there was usually one member, either male or female, to whom the spirit of the Mehi goddess would come, either on special occasions, or at any rate on the occasion of her annual tribute of all-night singing and worship. The writer was told of several occasions when the goddess had appeared to others, in their dreams, in order to rouse them from their sleep because the house was in danger of attack by thieves: indeed if she failed to do so, and they were robbed, it was an indication that she was displeased with them. On one occasion during the writer's stay, a young Bhil was anxious lest some of his crop should be stolen, so he slept in the field outside his house but the Mehi came and slapped his face, saying "Don't you know that I'm here, watching over this field ?" So he got up and went indoors again.

The Mehi is usually handed down from father to son, and there is an obligation to keep her glad with regular attentions. It happened recently in one household in Khajuria that the Mehi fell out so determinedly with the present generation of her keepers that they suffered one hardship after another. This was diagnosed at last by a very shrewd *devalo*, who undertook to offer her a more congenial home in another village. She agreed to go if she were accompanied by two cows, and so the *devalo* left, carrying the dangerous stones, and driving his cows before him, and the household was glad to be relieved of her presence.

HOUSEHOLD GODS.

Beside the *sikotra*, there were two forms of household god of a purely male character. The first of these was called *Dhula-na-pat*; the other, *Kamria-pat*. In each case the place of worship was in an inner room of the hut, and consisted of a low platform, about ten inches high, a foot wide and a few inches in depth, the whole being neatly smeared with mud and cowdung plaster. The platforms were referred to as the *pat*, (one of whose meanings of "throne"). The former of these two might co-exist in the same house as a *sikotra*, but never the latter. The former was at once milder, and less to be relied upon as a defender of the home. Its worshippers were quite unable to describe its attributes, except to say that it was of God, using the term *Bhagwan*, which they use when they refer to a remote,

aloof deity who is behind all reality, but with whom ordinary mortals have no dealings

Kamria-pat is quite different. The writer was at first surprised to be told, on asking about his nature : "He is a brass horse." In fact, he is a fierce, jealous and very present God, who is worshipped in the form of a small brass horse. In the majority of instances, the families which worship Kamria-pat do not possess such a horse, but only the empty *pat*. Those which do possess the horse are obliged to spend one month of every year in travelling from house to house of others who harbour the *pat*, passing their nights in singing and dancing before it. The songs, and the dance rhythms, which are accompanied by three traditional instruments (a type of drum called *sang*, a one-stringed fiddle, and flutes) are of a characteristic and very compelling character. *Kamria pat* is by far the most dreaded of all the form of protector, but also the most exacting, requiring his worshippers to keep up their singing and dancing hour after hour, for many nights of the year : at the end of the evening his spirit would come to one, or to several of the performers, and they would thrash upon the floor in violent paroxysms of possession. These were not regarded as *bhopas ;* it was merely an expression of his benevolent interest in the family. Sometimes one person became singled out for especially frequent and profound fits of possessions, and if this were the case, he or she would be tested by pouring some drops of very hot oil on to the back of their hand. If they did not wince, and if no blister came, then they were regarded as receiving an especially strong visitation of the God, and anything they said during their possession was treated as oracular.

The only two contexts in which the writer found the Bhils really strongly moved in relation to their religious beliefs were, first in describing the menace to the community of a really stubborn witch (if "swinging" did not satisfy her, there was nothing to be done but kill her, in order to protect the children that she might destroy) and in referring to Kamriapat. In all other contexts, the supernatural seemed to lie easily upon them. For example one informant, after describing how Melri must be offered a goat at Navratri, and how her *bhopa* will drink the goat's blood, mixed with *daru* and with milk, goes on to say : "If a Melri fails to protect your house from theft, you sometimes have to reproach her, give her abuse and knock her down,—leave her lying for some days with her face in the mud. Then she'll go and strike the thief, and then you will treat her well again. But Kamria is not like that. If a man ever breaks into a house and sees that brass horse, he'll not dare to steal

from there, or try to have sex with a married woman of that family. If he is foolish enough to do so, he will surely die."

THE GODS FROM MEWAR

Not every Bhil village possesses a *devra* with its row of earthenware figures, and those that do own one treat it with complete disregard for the greater part of the year. Only on two nights of the year are there *jagarans*, or all-night performances of hymn-singing and bhopa-possession, like that at the shrine of Devji in Sujarupa. The writer attended three such *jagarans*, and found certain points of interest. At the earlier stages of the ceremony, a group of the more enthusiastic worshippers gathered inside the shrine, and sang *bhajans* to a guitar-like instrument, and these *bhajans* were not in the broad Bhili dialect, but in Gujerati, showing that they had come from the sophisticated Hindu plains to the south, in Gujerat. This was however only the start of the evening. After the *bhopa* had made offerings to the gods, and been possessed for a time, and had handed out *prashad* (a share of the coconut chips and sugar given in offering) the proceedings were resumed outside the shrine, Bhil youths and girls forming two lines, each in Indian file, one close behind the other. These dancers move in concentric circles, to the beat of a large drum: and as they dance they sing songs in quite another idiom to that of the hymns previously heard. These songs have a characteristic rhythm, with a rising and falling note. One man stays apart from the rest and sings the verse, which is taken up before has finished each couplet and repeated by the rest, like a canon. Some of the songs are traditional, some are invented by the singer of the moments. One, with many spontaneous variations, is in honour of the Goddess of a nearby mountain, famous for its abundance of panther and other game; this one is called "*Kali* Dungri Wali—She of the Black Mountain"

It is evident that the occasion has ceased to be one of worship for the little-known and not very seriously regarded Hindu Gods, and has reverted to the pattern of a Bhil festival—but with this difference, that on this occasion they do not get drunk, and young men and girls do not slip away from the dance to meet in the darkness outside and make love These two concessions are made to the repressive prejudices which attend the worship of Brahmanical deities. In a typical *devra*, the following gods were observed: (i) Eight plaques representing Dharm-Rajah, a Vaisnavite God; (ii) a black-snake-god, here called Wasingh; (iii) five more versions of Dharm-Rajah; (iv) an old black seven-headed Wasingh; (v) three upright plain

stones, said to be the original deities of the shrine, described as Goddess-images; (vi) a stone to represent Ganesh; (vii) three paired standing male figures, Dard and Light Bhaironji; (viii) three Goddesses, mounted on tigers, called Chaumunda-Mata Outside, there are two stones set on a little platform, called *pauliya* (a Hindi word, meaning Door-keepers). These are described as "servant-gods —they guard the door."

The *devra* presents a striking contrast between the glitter of bright paint on the newest of these gods, which must have been brought from Molera during the last year, and the dull colourless dilapidated state of the rest, which have been lying out neglected in all weathers since they were brought some years before. It is noticeable too that the *bhopa* commands much less authority here than he does in Sujarupa or Delwara. On the two nights of the jagarans, he is acknowledged to be the central figure, but at other times he is seldom consulted, and he only rarely visits the shrine himself.

Besides the *bhopa* (or *bhopas*) of the shrine, however, there are certain other individuals who are associated with the worship of the Hindu Gods. These are men who have been influenced by the *bhakti* movement, usually through contact with someone who brought its practices back after living for some time in the plains, or sometimes as a result of the teaching of a wandering holy man who taught this sort of worship. Such holy men are known as *bhagats*, and with their aura of sanctity and of superior knowledge of the sophisticated world beyond the jungles they are treated with very profound respect, indeed are worshipped by the Bhils as if they were already Gods themselves. The pupils of these *bhagats* take pains to learn some of their devotional hymns and like to sing them to the *bina* and *majeras*, which are regarded as their appropriate accompaniment: and such neophytes are called *Sadh*. The *Sadh*, however, has no social function in the Bhil community. His religious instruction encourages him to concentrate in advancing his own spiritual condition with repeated exercises of praise and devotion, and to give up eating meat and drinking *daru*: and the rest of his community regard this as a strictly personal aberration, which they tolerate, without wishing to emulate it. Sometimes a *Sadh* may acquire a widespread reputation among his fellow-Sadhs in surrounding villages, and they will come to his house to join in his hymn-singing evenings. When this happens, his fellow-villagers begin to concede that he must be an exceptional man, in his own way; and he will now be confirmed in his title as a *pakka* (genuine) *Sadh*. This carries with it the distinction of special treatment after death. Ordinary mortals are cremated,

at the village burning-place which is usually near the bank of a river. *Devalos*, *Bhopas* and *Sadhs*, however, are buried instead. If a *Sadh* has acquired a considerable fame, he will be buried by the side of a main road or frequented path, and a small memorial built for him, with a stone set upon it. For one decade or two he may be worshipped by those of the village who remember him, and thereafter the memorial falls to pieces.

It is significant of the different functions of these three roles that the Sadh's funeral is the occasion for all-night hymn-singing by others of his persuasion (out of over 400 individuals living in the immediate vicinity of Khajuria there were only two recognised as Sadhs, and three or four young men beginning to take an interest in learning from them), the *Bhopa* is buried near the burning-ghat by his kinsmen and fellow-villagers: but the burial of a *devalo* is a very special and dangerous occasion. The corpse of the devalo can only be carried by other devalos, and only they remain by the prepared grave when the moment of interment comes—all the rest of the villagers retreat to a safe distance, the locality being so dangerously charged with devilish presences.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

In the Bhil country, besides the way-side memorial described above in the case of a celebrated Sadh, a similar rough platform, with a smooth stone set on top of it, may be constructed in memory of any Bhil who was outstanding in wealth or personality. Nearly always, such a one will have been the *mukhi* of his village. In a few instances, as occurs in Sandmaria village, the memorial may even have a canopy built over it, and the descendants of the dead may worship there for some generations. Usually these memorials called *sura*, are very crude and impermanent. A commoner form of *sura*, indistinguishable in form from the above, is that built at the spot where a Bhil met with a violent or accidental death. There were five such memorials of recent construction near Khajuria, one to a youth who was killed by a fall from a tree, another to a man shot by an arrow while robbing a neighbour's cornfield, the others a reminder of fights with sword and dagger. After a sudden death such as these, it is necessary for a goat to be killed, and its blood splashed over the newly-erected memorial: otherwise the ghost of the dead man will cause mischief.

The Bhils did not observe *shraddha* rites, but they did "remember the dead" on the occasion of their own most enjoyable festivals, at Holi and Navratri, leaving some food and a few drops of liquor

at the *sura* so that the ghost could also partake.

Another vestigial custom concerning the spirit of the dead was the *sakandhol*, a ceremony performed on the occasion of the *lokai* or funeral feast, which took place at an irregular interval (usually about a month) after a death. Inside the dead person's house a puppet of straw was attached to a taut string, and relaltives sat round singing songs of morning, telling about the life of the one who died. At the climax of this singing they would gaze at the puppet, and never failed to see it quiver, or stir in the wind, which they took as a sign that the spirit of the dead had momentarily entered it. This was the signal for a fresh outbreak of lamentation, and crying of his name. Then a portion of the feast was thrown outside the house, for the spirit and the rest divided among the guests. As so often, the contrast between this ceremony and its corresponding ceremony in orthodox Hinduism is the greater stress on the personal feeling, which is unashamedly expressed.

EARLY OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THESE AREAS.

In spite of the period of a century and a quarter in which the regions in which these three villages lie were under direct or indirect British rule, very few observations have been published on the social life of their people. Significantly, the best were those written many years ago, before improved communications brought the Mem-sahibs to India, and gave rise to the creation of the isolated life of the European Clubs. The early administrators, whether or not they took wives in the country, could not fail to a closer appreciation of way of life of the rural population. The writings of Colonel Tod, whose Annals of Rajasthan appeared in 1829, are a mine of information not only about the Rajputs, whom he championed with such vigour, but also about many of the other communities (such as the Garasias of Bhomat) whom he met in the course of his laborious travels. Another classic of the early days of British influence in Rajputana is Colonel Dixon's account (published in 1848) of his thirteen years' work as Superintendent of Mairwara. He says of the Rawat peoples: "Although they consider themselves Hindoos, their observances of that religion are extremely loose; nor would anyone brought up in the tenets of that faith consider them as associates. They are perfectly regardless of all the forms enjoined as to ablution, the preparation of their food, and other set ceremonies. Nor do they pay religious reverence to the idols worshipped by orthodox believers of that persuasion. They pay devotion to Devi, Devji, Ullajee, Seetla-

mata, Ramdevji, and Bhueeroonjee, and celebrate the rites of Holee and Dewalee. They partake freely of sheep, goats, cows and buffaloes, where such food is available. No interdiction exists as to the use of spirituous liquors" He then goes on to describe their very prevalent belief in witchcraft, which he held up to derision with all the authority of his position : "Ridicule had its full force, as was desired, and little is now heard of this superstition"

The Bhils of Bhomat have never been adequately studied, but one interesting article is to be found in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, dated 1875. This was written by a Dr. T. H. Hendley, who had served for two years as Surgeon to the Mewar Bhil Corps, in Kherwara. He also dwells on the Bhils' dread of the power of *dakans*, and mentions the practice of witch-swinging —"even now cases are often reported". He makes no mention of their household gods (about which they are still reluctant to talk, especially with strangers) but remarks on the numerous Goddess-shrines, with their offerings of horse-figures ; but he believes that *these horses are themselves worshipped. This may be a confusion* with the brass horse of the Kamria pat. His observation. "The women are very chaste and rarely have intrigues with strangers" reads strangely to-day, and may have been influenced by an euphemistic informant ; but it is of interest to note that in his medical examination of Bhil recruits for the Corps he found venereal disease to be extremely rare. To-day, it is extremely common, at any rate in Kotra Bhomat. He mentions the presence of visiting Hindu holy men, called babas, in the Kherwara area, and says that the Bhils there treat them with great reverence.

Dr. Hendley also quotes an informant who told him that in former times the local Goddesses (referred to usually as *Chamunda* or *Samuda*) were worshipped with human sacrifices At the time of his article, buffaloes and goats were killed in their name on special occasions.

CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

Having thus described, in summary form, the chief forms of religious observance in these three communities, it is proposed to consider what different elements can be distinguished in their midst, and in what degree these elements are stressed in each of these three villages. In order to do this, the subject will first be considered objectively, to show what consistencies of behaviour attend different forms of worship. Next, the whole range will be considered from the standpoint of the informed orthodox Hindu of this region, taking

the two best-educated Brahmans of Delwara as representative of this point of view. Finally, it will be shown how each community selects a small segment from the whole spectrum of religious behaviour, as the idiom of its own religious life.

One criterion of analysis is to contrast solitary with corporate worship. In sophisticated Hinduism, the highest levels of holiness are always reached alone, as the result of pursuing a way of approach to the divine ; and this leads to experiences which are incommunicable The ultimate reward of this sort of worship is liberation from the doom of re-birth, into a union with the divine essence. Expressed in simpler terms, a holy man is very near God : and consquently he is frequently worshipped by ordinary sinful martals as if he were already divine, and legends soon spring up to emphasise supper-human powers. For example, when Delwara was visited by the ecstatic Govind Guru, the writer was told several times that he was so holy that when rain fell, no drops touched the holy man or the cloth on which he sat : but the writer's own observation did not bear out this pious assertion

Ascetics and holy beggars are necessarily an exceptional case, but the principle of solitary worship was observed also by those members of the Brahman Rajput castes who concerned themselves seriously with their spiritual advancement. These were in the minority, except among Brahmans of the older generation. Their essential act of worship was to sit in a place apart, especially in the early morning after bathing but before breaking their fast, and to repeat one of the names of God in such a way as to withdraw their whole mental attention for a time from the outside world, and focus it on this concentration upon the divine essence. This form of solitary concentration and mental reaching-out towards God had also an obverse side, in the vigil beside the potent shrine or at the burning-ghat of the man who repeated over and over some magical charm, compelling the god or demon of that spot to invest it with his power. In Sujarupa and Khajuria the latter practice was well-known, but the former was found only in a rudimentary form. The *Sadhs* in the Bhil country did not practice it at all, while the *bhagats* of Sujarupa performed it in a mentary manner when they remembered—with the sole exception of one Nathu Singh who claimed that he took the name of God for an hour both night and morning. But Nathu Singh was an untrustworthy informant, and never more so than when praising his own virtues.

Corporate worship was by far the more common. It existed in families, in the village, in persone united by their common adherence

to a sect, and in the sense of being a participant in the whole wide range of Hindu observances. *Family* worship consisted not only of the act of remembrance and of homage to the ancestors, which was intense and short-lived among the Bhils, formalised and prolonged in the upper castes of Delwara, and which in Sujarupa seemed concentrated upon their not distant founder; it also entered into everyday behaviour, because to the Hindu, there are religious sanctions governing all the acts of daily life, especially the rules as to ritual cleanliness, the cooking and eating of food, the cleanliness of the home, and the conduct of family members one towards another. On all these points there was a gulf between accepted practice in Delwara and that of the Bhils, with Sujarupa occupying a midway position: one thing however all these communities had in common, and that was the expression of family solidarity at certain critical points, such as a marriage, or the period of mourning after a death, or the subsequent funeral feast which had to be performed as an obligation towards the dead. In one respect, the Bhils excelled the rest in family solidarity, namely in the support which they gave each other in the carrying on of a feud. In the other more "advanced" villages, litigation had taken the place of open violence, and prolonged lawsuits were commonly an expression of internal disputes within a lineage. The wider extension of family obligations concerned the caste as a whole, whose authority governed the censure of acts of impiety as well as infringements of purely secular rules (where indeed the two could be divided). Caste meetings were however infrequent. Among the Bhils they were unknown: when large numbers of Bhils met together, it was for political and not for religious reasons. In Delwara, a general complaint was made that the caste-councils had lost their old prestige. Nowadays young men could violate the most important caste rules with impunity, so long as they did not infringe the secular law of the courts as embodied in the Indian Penal Code.

Village religious observances had this quality, that there was no compulsion to show assiduity in worshipping the shrines which served all the village community: but that any act of disrespect, or of open repudiation of these shrines would excite immediate reprisals from the offender's village neighbours. A conspicuous example of this occurred during the writer's stay in Delwara, when a foolish youth accepted a bet of fifty rupees that he would not dare to swallow as much as a pin-head of human faeces. The enormity of his offence was so great that not only was he outcasted by his fellow Darogas, but the whole village turned against him and made it plain that he had better go and live elsewhere. On the positive side, the villagers united in

common at certain of the big seasonal ceremonies, such as the woman's worship of Seetla-Mata (strictly observed in Delwara, less so in Sujarupa and not at all in Khajuria, in direct ratio to the incidence of smallpox in these three localities), and the cheerful feasts of Holi, Divali and Gangor (only the first of which was generally observed in Sujarupa and Khajuria).

Membership of sects was a minority activity, and was seen with its most formal organisation in the rural villages round about. Sujarupa, although *bhakti* sects existed, both in their respectable and in their abhorred forms also in the vicinity of Delwara. In the latter village there were a number of enthusiasts who were frequent attenders at hymn-singing sessions at certain of the temples, but these sessions were open to all and sundry and were conducted without formality. Those who were serious adepts of the *bhakti-marg*, like young Nahar Singh, used to travel round the surrounding country to attend *satsangs* at the homes of fellow-members of their sects. In Khajuria, the *bhakti-marg* existed in embryo in the persons of the few *Sadhs*, but was not organised. On the other hand, there was something of this group—identinfication in the worship of the household gods, *Sikotra*, *Dhulanapat* and *Kamria-pat*. These had something of the character of family worship, as they bestowed protection on the household which harboured and payed homage to them, but they could also be worshipped and have favours asked of them by others as well. The corporate element in their worship was most apparent in the case of *Kamria-pat*, because every family which worshipped the Brass Horse was linked with every other one, through knowing the same hymns, and dance and song, and through the common experience of being possessed by his spirit. There was another factor which tended to cause a feeling of solidarity to develop among these worshippers, and this was that families which did not subscribe to this cult were reluctant to enter into marriage ties with those that did : they felt that the responsibilities involved in worshipping the Horse were even more onerous than his protection justified, and preferred to keep clear of it altogether.

Finally, there was the sense of belonging to a vast and all-embracing community, whose external symbols were present in every village temple, and wayside shrine. The people of Sujarupa and Delwara took great pleasure, in their infrequent excursions into the surrounding country, in visiting strange temples, more especially those which had acquired a more than local fame, as was the case with Miala, Dadalia, Eklingji and Nathdwara. This was enhanced by the prevailing belief that one receives a spiritual enhancement from ex-

periencing a *darshan* (literally, a vision), whether of a saintly man or of a celebrated idol of a God, The feeling of participation in the Hindu community depends however on one's acceptance of one's own position in the heirarchical order ; and for this reason the Rawats of Sujarupa professed a strong dislike for the outside world, where their pretention of Rajput status was ignored or derided. Even those who earned good money in the mills of Ahmedabad always kept the ambition of returning to the Magra to cultivate a plot of land beside their fellow Rawat Rajputs. This was still more the case with the Bhils, who found themselves treated by the Hindus as members of the lowest caste. They are excluded from some temples, and admitted to some others only on certain festival days. Still, there are one or two Hindu temples in large villages on the fringe of the Bhomat which have a fame among them, and where they too like to go, to have a *darshan* of a God about whom they may know nothing but his name.

Another way of considering these forms of worship is to assess them in terms of the universality of their recognition The narrowest range must then be ascribed to the worship of the family ancestor ; and the next, to the purely local god, the protector of some glen or pathway. Yet this is often confused by the borrowing of a name from a wider context, as the Bhils do in calling their local deities Chamunda, or the Rawats with their profusion of little Bharonjis : it is shown to be a genuine distinction when one finds purely local names, like Radhaji, or Bhumiaji for the protectors of a field, and Kali Dungri Wali for the Goddess of the Black Mountain Beyond this can be reckoned those especial Gods or Goddesses which are linked with one particular caste, or section within a caste, as in the case of the Rawats' *Piplaj-Mata*, the Jhala Rajputs' *Ad Mataji*, and the Bhils' *Kamria-pat*. Then there are Gods which are recognised over a wide region, but which are unknown in the rest of India. A good example of this is Ram Devji, whose name is honoured in Rajasthan (although for the most part among the Sudra castes) and known in parts of Gujerat but not elsewhere, or Devji and Tejaji who are worshipped only in the Rawats' territory. Beyond this again are those Gods and Goddesses which are representatives of the Hindu pantheon, but which are specially reverenced in certain regions because there exists of famous image of them there. This often finds expression in the customary greetings of that part, as in Mewar one says : "Jai Sri Nathji", and further north, "Jai Char-Bhujaji", while elsewhere "Jai Sri Krishna" may be the usual exchange. In this connection it is noteworthy that the Bhil's invariably greet each other

with the commonest name of God : "Ram, Ram" ; and the Rawats do the same, or else say : "Jai Ramji ki"

With this extension we have exhausted the ordinary villager's knowledge of the Hindu Gods. If he lives in a large centre, such as Delwara, he may learn more, by listening to *bhajans* and to the reading of sacred *katha*, but he is always aware that there are more and more that he has never heard of. For practical purposes he is concerned only with those which he sees represented in the temples and shrines in the vicinity of his home.

Another distinction is between those forms of worship which are associated with possession by a spirit, and those to whom this occurrence is alien. In the former class come all those shrines (most of them small and unpretentious) where there is a *bhopa* to act as intermediary for the God—the Bhaironjis and Radhajis and Matajis —but also the Bhils' household gods, and those instances of *purbaj*-possession, in Delwara. This last is closely akin to the similar possession in Delwara. This last is closely akin to the similar possession which marks affliction by a mischievous ghosts, or by the disembodied spirit of a witch.

Finally, the various forms of worship can be classified in terms of the type of offerings which are acceptable to the Gods concerned ; and here the great division is between those which accept blood and wine, and those to whom bloodshed and the very smell of alcohol is abhorrent. The latter have a great variety of forms of "cool" offerings : fruit, flowers, coconuts, incense and the flame of a wick burning sweet oil or melted butter being the commonest. The association, as in the Bhil country, of a special form of offering (the clay horse) with a particular deity is most uncommon.

RANK IN PRESTIGE OF VARIOUS PRACTICES.

In this consideration of rank-order of the practices which have been described above, it is proposed to take the outlook of Delwara Brahmans as the point of reference They would no hesitation in considering the highest expression of the religious life to be the most intellectual one, namely the practice of abstinence, asceticism and regular spiritual exercises carried out in solitude with the aim of attaining a direct intuition of the nature of God. This is the Hindu ideal, which justifies the reverence with which holy wandering beggars are regarded, and which also underlies the respect which should be paid to the Brahman, because not only is he by birth set far on the way towards divinity, but his caste obligations of religious study and prayer ensure that he will continue to advance in godliness.

The Brahman respects all acts of piety performed towards the two great Gods of Hinduism, Shiva and Vishnu ; and also he is disposed in favour of all those who do what is right, as it is laid down in their Sanskrit scriptures. This includes not only the invocation of the other major Gods at the important moments in one's family life, and their proper worship at their annual festivals, but also the leading of a life in all respects in accordance with the instructions laid down in his texts for the regulation of the proper conduct of every one of the four Estates-Rulers, Priests, Merchants, Labourers. They are naturally very conservative, resenting any departure from the traditional ways of doing things There is a place in his texts for a disciplined and pious remembering of one's ancestors in the *shraddha* rites, and he considers it right that the Goddess, whether in the form of Seetla-Mata, or Gangaur, or Gangaji should be honoured with flowers and sweet offerings : but the Brahman disapproves of the taking of life, and so regards the customary blood-sacrifices to the Goddess as a sign of ignorance and error. He is still more condemnatory of all those small Gods which have *bhopa*-possession as a feature of their worship, whether or not they also have blood-sacrifices. All these, he says, are so much stupidity : they are not Gods at all—just ghosts and demons, if anything at all.

The writer was for some time confused as to the Brahmans' attitude towards ghosts, witchcraft and malicious magic : they would dismiss all that as "lies, nonsense" , and yet at other times they would say : "Of course there *are* ghosts and witches in this country side, as there are everywhere,—but they cannot harm a man who worships God with an undivided mind." (Of medieval European faith in the power of the Lord's Prayer to repell witches and demons.) One Brahman described how he was able to repell ghosts which threatened him in the dusk by repeating holy Sanskrit verses ; but one day he was beset by a particularly virulent ghost, that of a Brahman who had died a violent death before his time ; and every time he repeaked a *Slok*, the ghost was able to cap it with another. As a result of this encounter he became seriously ill, and felt himself lucky to have escaped with his life. Everything pertaining to the "ripening" of magical charms by the aid of ghosts or wayside godlings is deplored by the Brahman as unclean, impious behaviour . impious because it represents an attempt to compell supernatural forces in one's favour, instead of accepting one's fate as it has been ordained[8].

The Brahmans are aware that the tribal peoples have other forms of worship. They do not know exactly what these are, but

have no hesitation in dismissing them as low, superstitious practices. The tribal peoples are particularly repugnant to them because of their neglect of the rules as to eating, drinking, and especially as to ritual cleanliness, which are, in the Brahmans' opinion, absolutely essential adjuncts of holiness.

In Delwara, the Brahmans were not observed to take an active part in the public hymn-singings, although they frequently paused to look on for a few minutes. Their attitude was, that the way of devotion was right and proper for the uneducated, lower-caste people of good intention, but not fitting for scholarly men like themselves. They were vehemently opposed to the practices of the orgiastic sects, which they denounced as being in the last degree unclean and sacrilegious.

DEGREE OF OBSERVANCE OF DIFFERENT PRACTICES.

The range of different forms of religious observance in these three communities has already been presented. It remains now to indicate where the chief emphasis lay.

The Bhils gave the impression of being a people on whom religion lay lightly : something to be remembered when a favour was to be asked, or a misfortune averted. In their ordinary living, it was the *devalo*, the house-protecting *sikotra* and the threat from other *sikotras* and *dakans* which concerned them most frequently ; but here again it was only when sickness or disaster of some sort came, that they would attend to these matters. For the rest, they treated their household gods and their devalo with familiar disregard. The only exception to this was in those families which harboured Kamria-pat, and which had to pay in more strenuous attentions for the greater security which his protection was believed to give. The Gods from Mewar, with their *bhopa* received scanty attention, and the aspiring *Sadhs* even less from the bulk of the Bhil villagers.

In Sujarupa, manifestations of the *bhakti marg* were the commonest form of religious behaviour : but this had clearly not been the case for many years, to judge from the aloof attitude of the older men, and their occasional grumbling comments to the writer : "What do they mean by this, learning all these Brahman tricks in Ahmedabad—giving up meat and liquor and singing hymns all night ! Don't they know that we Rajputs are entitled to eat and drink that if we like ?" Complete unanimity was shown in their enthusiasm for the annual worship of Ram-Devji ; and a large measure of agreement in their confidence in the *bhopas* of Danaji and Devji (here Nathu Singh was the only one to denounce them as delusory). Little

was known of the higher flights of Hinduism, but these Rawats indentified themselves wholeheartedly with the world of orthodox Hinduism, even though the reverse might not be the case.

In Delwara, the whole of the above range of behaviour was exhibited, except for the Bhils' house-gods: even these may have been present, because on numerous occasions the writer heard a strange music and chanting coming from houses in the Bhils' quarter of the village, and months later he was able to recognise a similar refrain in the worship of Kamria-pat, but this was not verified in Delwara. Apart from a very few educated Brahmins and Rajputs intent on their solitary spiritual exercises, and one or two individual adherents of the *bhakti-panths* the greater part of village religious observance was centred round the many shrines where *bhopas* "played" and spoke their oracles on a given night each week. These ceremonies were attended for the most part by people of the lower castes, who were in the majority in the village, but it was noteworthy that Banias, Rajputs and even occasionally some of the uneducated Brahmans were also to be seen in their audiences. Other regularly patronised, but less numerous groups were those which met to hear *katha* and sing hymns at the three most active high-Hindu temples. The Banias, though nominally a sect apart, were to the fore in both of these popular forms of worship. In their own observances, they were assiduous in offering hospitality to holy men, whether Jain or Hindu, and in listening to what they had to say, with many flattering interjections: but not one of them, to the writer's observation, put his religious interests on a par with the ruling passion of their lives, which was to make money. It is no exaggeration to say that the ceremony which they carried out with the most fervour was the ritual worship of their shop ledgers, and writing equipment, and pieces of money, which took place at Divali—and this was strictly speaking a Hindu observance, which the Brahmans had to conduct for them: it had no sanction in orthodox Jainism at all.[9]

COMPARISON WITH MEDIAEVAL BRITAIN.

To anyone who has read Dr. Margaret Mureay's work: "The Horned God," on the subject of the prolonged underground survival in Britain of the pagan beliefs and rituals which had preceded Christianity, this account of the different orders of popular worship in India must present a close analogy. In fourteenth-century Britain there still existed many of the early inhabitants of these islands, as yet unassimilated either ethnologically or in their religion. It is these, the "little people," who were referred to as the "fairies," and to

whom all kinds of magical and terrible powers were attributed. Not everyone will agree with the whole of Dr. Murray's argument, in which she goes on to equate the witches, with their covens and their alliance with the "powers of evil" with the deliberate maintenance of the old pagan beliefs · but to the writer the analogy is very striking between the Christian clerics' denunciation of the witches and the Brahmans' references to all forms of *bhopa*-cult as being the work of devils. Similar too is the attitude of the "elect" Hindu villager towards the Bhils, the "little people" of the hills and forests, to whom they are quick to ascribe all kinds of magical powers.

It does seem that just as Christianity became the religion of the dominant people in Britain, and slowly over the centuries succeeded in obliterating the last of the stubborn survivals of the old beliefs, so it may well be in the Bhomat. Already in the Rawats we see a community which has discarded most of the practices which once it had in common with its tribal neighbours, and with each generation it seems to enhance its new Hindu respectability. Among the Bhils, this process has only begun, but with the improvement of communications and the consequent increase of intercourse with the Hindu society of their rulers, it appears likely that the Bhils of Kotra Bhomat will soon apply themselves to adopting Hindu beliefs and Hindu values, as their kinsmen in the more accessible Kherwara Bhomat have already been doing for some generations.

NOTES

The following notes, indicated in the text, were contributed by Professor Devid G. Mandelbaum after his perusal of the manuscript .—

1. The whole matter of the coming of the Aryans is enshrouded in myth, both of Sanskrit origin and made by the students of India themselves. There is really no good evidence that the Vedic peoples came from anywhere else or knew anything but the Punjab. In the Vedas there is no mention of any higher civilisations like these of Harappa (except for some tortured interpretations of a few very vague references) nor indeed is there much that can be relied on about "primitive animism". The term "animism" has been kicked around so much in literature that I believe some other term is better used instead of it

2. I am execremely sceptical about the attempts which have been made to link some of the seal engravings in Mohenjodaro with Hindu iconography. It seems most tenuous to me.

3. The legend of descent from miscegenation is a most common one. Indeed a caste that is socially mobile has been known to invent noble, although sinister, descent.

4. This is widely true in India, that the first house built has a special ritual position. This is some how linked with the general concept of time.

5. The story of the accomplishments of Suja Singh may have been a bit embellished in the passage of time. Does it seem likely that a pioneer who had to hew out a new homestead from the jungle would rise to such accomplishments in his lifetime ? Also the veneration of Suja Singh is, I think, comparable to the veneration of the founder of Senapur, the Thakur village near Benares that Opler has written about.

6. It is interesting that the ghost may come back to possess his widow. Among the Kota on whom I am now working, the ghost has a social personality but only until the second funeral. Thereafter he does not return, except occasionally to speak through a woman medium. I think the term "ancester worship" is a bit misleading here.

7. Among the Kota also the wild jungle-dwelling Kurumba are supposed to be very potent in witchcraft. I have noted that it very frequently is the case that a people who are stronger economically and socially than certain of their neighbours who, in contrast, lead a crude haphazard sort of life, frequently attribute to the "wilder" people great supernatural prowess.

8. I do not think this interpretation is quite accurate That is, I believe that all the complex Brahmin ritual has the effect of compelling supernatural forces. Perhaps the difference is that these forces are more personalised in the non-Brahminical worship. At any rate, the point I am trying to make is that the Sanskrit ritual has strong compulsive elements, both in the ordinary and in the psychiatric sense.

9. You sound a little down on the Banias. Can it be that they are most insecure people living in the midst of almost uncontrollable forces and they must make their way in this highly dangerous environment by the only means available to them ?



THE MEANING OF HINDUISM IN RURAL MALWA

K. S. Mathur

I

Hinduism is commonly understood as 'the religion of the Hindus'. The diversity of beliefs, philosophies, creeds, dogmas, rites and ceremonies, and social practices prevalent among the people of this great country, however, preclude any precise definition of Hinduism. "It is possible to find within its range philosophic mystics who disclaim beliefs in a personal Deity, fervent monotheists who direct their devotions towards a single personal God, of Whom and to Whom they speak in terms resembling those used by many Christians; and at the other extreme, crude animists whose main concern is with some local godling, generally a female tutelary divinity of the village, and polytheists of a type familiar to readers of Greek and Roman literature, closely resembling the scrupulously superstitious character outlined by Theophrastus". (Bouquet, 1948, p. 11)

The variation is both regional and sect-linked. At different times in the history of our country, different religious sects arose and sought to gain influence among the masses. These sects belong to five broad categories. These categories are . Vaishnava, Shava, Shakta, Smarta, and Tantrik. In each category, there are a number of sects Each sect has its own characteristic religious beliefs and practices prescribed for its members.

Not all of these religious sects are spread—in their membership and belief—all over India. Some of the sect movements were strictly local and most had their influence only over a part of the country.

The territorial variation in Hinduism is also important for purposes of social analysis. Srinivas has classified Hinduism in three categories from the point of view of its spread, viz , All-India Hinduism, North Indian Hinduism and Peninsular Hinduism, and regional Hinduism(1952, p. 213). Social anthropologists and sociologists who have worked in Indian villages have constantly referred to such regional variations in the religious life of the people. Writes Dube: "Village Hinduism is not easy to describe. It is an extremely elastic religion, and within its all-India framework admits of a considerable degree of religional and local variation". (1955, p. 94).

II

The object of this paper is to give a portrait of Hinduism as it appears to the rural Hindu population of Central Malwa and to analyse what they mean by *'Hindu dharma'*. The data on which this is based was collected during a research project in Central Malwa in 1956 while the author was working as a Research Scholar of the Australian National University. This was sought to be done by two techniques, viz., observation and questionnaire. In the first instance, the religious life of the people was observed. This was done in detail in one village and includes data collected on temple and domestic worship, fasts, festivals and solemnizations. Secondly, a questionnaire was prepared and given to about fifty subjects seeking information on their ideas about deities, Hindu religious concepts like *dharma*, *karma* and *punarjanma*, and their views about what constitutes Hinduism. The subjects were selected from ten prominent castes of the villages in this sub-region viz., Malwi Brahmin, Rajput, Khati, Anjana, Vairagi Vaishnava, Malwi Lohar, Nai, Darzi, Malwi Balai and Malwi Chamar. Fortyone of the subjects were men and nine women. The subjects were of ages varying between thirty and sixty; the men were only slightly educated—none beyond the secondary standard, the women were all illiterate. The questionnaire was taken to the subjects personally by the author and answers were taken down by their consent. On most occasions, such interviews were private at which only the informant and the author were present, but in a few cases, other people of the village participated and influenced the views of the informant.

III

In the village which was intensively studied—which we shall here call Patal—there are four temples and seven shrines, dedicated to Hindu deities. On the north-western fringe of the village is an old temple in black stone dedicated to Shiva. In the middle of the village habitation are three temples—mud structures with galvanised iron sheet roofs. Two of these are dedicated to Lord Rama and one to Lord Krishna. These temples house stone images of the deities to whom they are dedicated. In the Shiva temple is the traditional symbol of Lord Shiva—the *lingam*. These temples are served by priests belonging to the Brahmin and other priestly 'clean' castes, like Gosain and Vairagi Vaishnava: the priest at the Shiva temple is a Gosain, one of the Rama temples is served by a Brahmin, and the other Rama temple and the Krishna temple are served by men belonging to the Vairagi Vaishnava caste.

Six of the seven shrines are located in wards predominently inhabited by 'shudra' and 'untouchable' castes. Most of the deities honoured at these shrines are also associated with particular castes; a member of the caste serves as priest at the shrine of his castes deity, and the caste group observes a ritual cult of the deity. The shrine to Shitala (smallpox goddess), for instance, is located in the Balai ward by the village pond, a Balai serves as priest and oracle to the goddess, and every year in the month of *Kuar*, the Balai observe a nine day festival in honour of Shitala. The shrine of Ram Deo Ji, a deity of the Bhambi caste, is situated in the Bhambi ward, and a man of the Bhambi caste serves as priest and minstrel at this shrine. The Desha Chamar have the shrine of their caste deity, Bhawani Mata, in a small hut situated in their ward; the deity is served by a Desha Chamar, who observe a seven-day festival of the goddess in the month of *Chait*. Kalka Mata's shrine stands on the westernmost end in the village habitation, just opposite the Balai Chamar ward. A Nath Jogi serves here as priest, and a Gujerati Chamar as oracle to the goddess. Mari Mata is regarded as the caste deity of the Malwi Chamar, and her small shrine is built under a tree immediately behind the Malwi Chamar row of houses outside the village. Another small shrine dedicated to the caste deity of the Bagri caste is situated in the cluster of Bagri houses, and a woman of the caste offers ocassional oblations at the shrine; once a year, in the month of *Kuar*, the Bagri sacrifice a goat at the shrine, and believe that the caste deity looks after the welfare of the caste.

The only prominent shrine in Patal village which is not located in an 'unclean' or 'untouchable' caste ward is the 'shrine of the village deities'. This shrine stands on the southern side of the village, across the stream which runs by the habitation area. Its priest belongs to the Mali caste. Once every year, during the festival of Dasehra (in the month of *Kuar*), a goat is sacrificed to the village deities, and once every ten or twelve years a big fair is held at the site, attended by all the people of Patal and many neighbouring villages.

Most of the Hindu villagers of Patal, with the exception of the Brahmin and a few others, have no fixed time for daily worship. The exceptions are: males belonging to the two Brahmin families and the single Palliwal Bania family, one Rajput who is a very old man, men belonging to the Vairagi Vaishnava and Gosain castes who are temple priests, two Khati old men, and one old man belongling the the Gujerati Lohar caste. For men of the Brahmin, Vairagi, Gosain, and Palliwal Bania castes, daily worship is an imperative, enjoined upon them by their *jati dharma*. They are required to go through the

upanayana (*janoi*) ceremony at the age of ten to twelve, and wear the sacred thread thereafter.

The early morning daily routine of these men is like this : they get up early in the morning before sunrise, go out to the fields to defecate (in Sanskrit this is called *saucha kriya*, i.e., 'the process of cleansing'), clean the mouth with a *nim* twig, take a bath and don clean garments ; then they wipe and clean the place of worship and perform *pooja* in the traditional style ; they conclude the morning *pooja* by offering libations of water to the rising sun and chanting the sacred *gayatri mantra*.

The other four men (one Rajput, two Khati, and one Gujerati Lohar) who perform some kind of morning *pooja* every day are old men. They say that they spent, like others, their youth in wordly pleasures, and it is that in their old age, they must remember the creator and try to improve their *Karma*.

Similarly, the number of persons who visit a temple every day is very small. I checked the daily temple attendance in Patal over a month (December 1955). Analysis of these attendance lists revealed that the number of devotees regularly visiting any one of the four temples in Patal village was in no case more than ten. Most of these regular temple visitors belong to the 'clean' castes.

We find that out of a total of 1,037 Hindus in Patal, 37 spend some time every day in the pursuit of religion, either performing *pooja* in their own houses or visiting one of the village temples. This analysis reveals two remarkable facts ; they are : (i) no woman from any caste was found who performed *pooja* or visited a temple every day ; and (ii) with the exception of the Nath Jogi (who are a sectarian caste), no persons belonging to the 'sudra' or 'untouchable' castes were found performing the daily *pooja* or visiting a temple every day.

The scriptural position in this respect is that women and *sudra* are considered to be incapable of the pursuit of divine knowledge and religion, and therefore, debarred from these. The people of Patal do not seem to be aware of such prohibitions, however They say there are practical difficulties in the way of a woman or a member of one of the '*sudra*' or 'untouchable' castes performing the traditional *pooja* or visiting a temple every day. Some reasons given to me by some elderly women of Patal why women cannot be regular worshippers are : (i) for most of their life, they remain unclean for a few days every month when they have their periods ; (ii) they do not get sufficient time from looking after children and domestic business ; and (iii) their primary duty is to serve their husbands and children.

About the *sudras*, the general opinion among 'clean' *dwija* castes

is that there is no real barrier for a *sudra* performing daily worship and visiting a temple regularly, and that they (*i. e.*, the *sudras*) are themselves responsible for their 'irreligious' behaviour. The *sudras* have other explanations: some say that they have to work hard to earn their living and thus they do not get sufficient time, money or energy for what they call 'the luxury of worship and religion'. Others say that there is no real necessity for everyday worship and devotion; to them religious worship is like medicine which is to be resorted to only in times of calamity. "When we are in trouble", I was told by an elderly Balai man, "we make vows and promises to the deity, and when the trouble is over, we fulfil those promises by ceremonially worshipping the deity. The deity is usually our own caste deity, but in urgent cases, we may appeal to the great deities of Hinduism, like Hanuman". Such a view about the use of religious worship is shared by most of the young and able bodied men of all castes. A few educated young men belonging to the *sudra* castes asserted that they would like to go to the Hindu temples and worship there if they were allowed to worship in the same way as 'clean' caste Hindus were. This, however, was disallowed by the 'clean' caste Hindus.

The Hindus of Patal say they worship all the major gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Such an assertion is made by members of all castes, 'clean', 'unclean' and 'untouchable'. I collected lists of deities they worshipped from a sample of informants drawn from all the castes in the village. Names of deities which are present in all the lists are: Rama, Krishna, Siva or Mahadeva, Surya, Hanuman, Ganesha, Satya Narain, Nag, Sitala, Bheru, and Sati. In the lists given by informants from the 'unclean' and 'untouchable' castes were mentioned some names of deities which were absent from the lists drawn up by 'clean' caste informants. They are Ram Deoji, Bhawani, Kalka, Mari, Bari, Phoolmati, and Lal Begi. There are shrines dedicated to all these deities in Patal.

The Brahmin informant mentioned the names of Ganga, Indra, Parasurama, and Agni also. The Rajputs said they worshipped Ajaypal Maharaj who was represented by a slab of stone (*palya*) on the south-eastern fringe of the village habitation. The Lohar informant included in his list of deities the name of Vishwakarma (literally meaning, 'He who made the universe') also; and the Kumhar said they worshipped Prajapati (literally meaning, 'The Lord of peoples') every time they fired their earthen pots; the Palliwal Bania said Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) was the special deity worshipped by his caste. The Vairagi Vaishnava said that in addition to the Vaishnava deities (Rama, Krishna and Hanuman), they worshipped Baba

Haridas who, they say, was the preceptor of all Vairagi Vaishnava. Similarly, the Nath Jogi said they worshipped their first *guru*, Gorakhnath.

It appears to be only a principle that all Hindus, 'clean', unclean', and 'untouchable'—profess to worship all or most of the deities of classical Hinduism as also the local godlings. In practice, however, each caste sticks to a few deities. They are more frequently worshipped by members of that caste and less frequently by other castes. Thus Vaishnava deities—Rama and Krishna—are worshipped more often by the Brahmin and other vegetarian 'clean' castes, like Palliwal Bania, Khati, Darji and Gujerati Lohar, and less often by those castes who in principle partake of meat and alcoholic drinks. It is significant to point out here that all over Malwa and Western India particularly, vegetarian food is spoken of as *vaishnava* food, and non-vegetarian food is referred to as *Rajputi* food

The Rajput and other castes of the Rajput block worship Shiva more often. These castes are also referred to as the Shiva castes

In 'unclean' and 'untouchable' castes, the limits are further narrowed down. Here, almost each caste has its own deity, who is sometimes referred to by the people as their *jati deota* or caste deity. Sitala is the caste deity of the Malwi and Gujerati Balai ; Ram Deo Ji, of the Bhambi ; Bhawani, of the Desha Chamar ; Kalka, of the Gujerati Chamar ; Mari, of the Malwi Chamar ; Bari, of the Bagri ; Phoolmati, of the Bargunda ; and Lalbegi, of the Bhangi.

The Hindu conception of deity is that it is a form—one of the numerous forms—of the Supreme Force. Each caste (having a caste deity) regards its caste deity as the most important and prominent form of the Supreme Force, even though, it recognizes that other deities are also forms of the same Supreme Force.

As might be expected, there are variations in the procedure of *pooja worship* offered to the different deities. These are particularly striking in the matter of food offered to the deity, the caste of the officiating priest, and the hymns or incantations recited in honour of the deity.

Each deity has its own favourite food which is generally offered to it by the worshipper. Most of the gods and goddesses of classical Hinduism are believed to be fond of sweet food, milk and milk preparations which are offered to them at their *pooja*. Shiva is also a vegetarian god : he is believed to be fond of narcotics other than alcoholic drinks, though ; and devotees to Siva offer him *bhang* and *ganja* and partake of the narcotics themselves. Ram Deo Ji is also a vegetarian and teetotal deity. On the other hand, Bhawani, Kalka, Sitala, Mari, Bari, Phoolmati and Lalbegi are deities who are believed

to be extremely fond of animal sacrifice. The character of Bheru varies according to the food habits of the caste with whom he is associated. By the vegetarian castes, a coconut is offered to him, whereas the non-vegetarian castes offer in his name sacrifice of a he-goat.

The caste of the priest also varies. The Brahmin serve only the Vaishnava gods and officiate at those rituals only where these deities are worshipped. Moreover, they serve only the 'clean' castes and the Nath Jogi. Vairagi Vaishnava and Gosain priests do likewise. At rituals observed in honour of other deities, the regular priest of the deity concerned officiates. The priest is generally drawn from the caste whose caste deity the god or goddess happens to be.

The nature of the incantations or hymns and the language in which they are spoken varies in accordance with the caste of the priest. Only the Brahmin, Vairagi Vaishnava and Gosain priests are eligible to chant scriptural incantations in Sanskrit. The others have to be satisfied with hymns in the local dialect. For every diety, there are different Sanskrit incantations and Hindi hymns and these have to be recited on appropriate occasions.

IV

Fasts and feasts form an important part of the religious life of village Hindus. They may be called 'fixed rituals', because the occasion and date for their performance is fixed on the local calendar. They are observed as seasonal festivals. Their number is strikingly large, and their distribution over the year very irregular. Not all of them are observed by all castes of the village.

Given below is a chart listing the regular festivals observed by the Hindus of Patal, the month and date on which each is observed and the castes who observe it. The dates on which these festivals are observed are reckoned in terms of the Hindu calendar. The months of the Hindu year are lunar months. Only the festival of Makar Sankranti also known a Til Sankrhnti is celebrated on a date reckoned in terms of the solar calendar. The festival marks the transit of the sun at the Tropic of Capricorn, and is popularly believed to be the beginning of the day of the gods and the night of the demons. Makar Sankranti may thus fall either in the lunar month of Poos or Magh. The festival is observed by 'clean' castes only, who bathe in cold water and give alms of rice and pulse grain to the Brahmin and temple priest.

An Analysis of these 'fixed annual rituals' from the point of view of their religious import reveals that:

(i) three of them, viz., *Rama nomi*, *Krishna atham* and *Ganesh choth*, are celebrated to commemorate the birth of three of the principal gods of Hindu pantheon ; two others, viz., *Shiva ratri* and *Anant chodas*, are also connected with two of the major Hindu gods ;

(ii) three, viz., *Mahadeo Baba Ki jatra*, *Ganga dashmi*, and *Katik jatra* are pilgrimages to places considered to be sacred ;

(iii) six of these are by way of rituals devised to protect crops and cattle ; these are *Akhati*, *Hariya goondiya*, *Hartalika*, *Keli pooja*, *Dewali and Annakot—Gobardhan ;*

(iv) at six of the annual rituals (*Rishi panchami*, *Pitar Paksha*, *Nag panchami*, *Deva soni*, *Deva Uthni*, *and Teja ji ki jatra*), saints, ancestors and other local deities are honoured ;

(v) the number of festivals observed by women alone is twelve ; of these six are aimed at obtaining health and long life for husbands ; the six are *Gangor*, *Bar ammavas*, *Bar satam*, *Hariyali*, *Garba and Karua atham* ; on these occasions, they keep a day long fast, and offer *pooja* and prayers to the goddess Gouri, the *peepal* tree, the serpent god, or the Moon god for the perpetuation of their *suhag* (married state) ;

(vi) three rituals (*Bheru pooja*, *Mata poojan*, *and Narak chodas*) are aimed at procuring the welfare of one of the kin units—the family and the lineage ;

(vii) the theme of at least four rituals is the dramatization of the brother-sister relationship, real or hypothetical ; these are *Dewasa*, *Rakhi*, *Bhai beej and Ram nam* ;

(viii) twice a year, rituals are observed to honour the mother goddess ; on these occasions, the priest of the goddess worshipped goes into a trance and makes predictions for the half year—about crops, cattle, market conditions, disease, epidemics, and other topics of a general nature which are of interest to the village people ,

(ix) Lastly, there are the communal rituals, festivals in the real sense of the term, such as *Holi*, *Dol gyaras*, *Dashera*, *and Basant panchami*, when people observe a holiday from work and come out into the village lanes to sing songs and make merry.

Often the religious imsort of a ritual is differently understood by different castes. To the Palliwal Bania of Patal and other Vaisya castes of neighbouring villages, Dewali is the day for the worship of the goddess of wealth; for the others, is a festival of lights, sweets and fireworks. Similarly, Dashera is a primarily Rajput ritual when they worship their arms and weapons. In feudal times this was called the day of *seemolanghan* ('violation of frontiers') when kings tried to extend the frontiers of their own domains by annexing land

from neigbouring states. On the Rakhi day, adult Brahmin males keep a day long fast and change the sacred thread they wear on their shoulders.

Most of these rituals are purely domestic and private in character. The ceremonials are performed in the family house or in the village lane just outside the house, and they are presided over by the head of the household. In case of rituals observed by women exclusively, the *pooja* is supervised by the eldest female member of the household.

All these rituals are very similar in their formal features. The sequence of events is more or less the same. The participants observe a fast before the performance and undergo a ceremonial purification by bathing in the morning and donning washed garments. Sweets are cooked with care and special precautions. The girls and young women of the family paint traditional designs on the floor and walls of the scene of worship. Earthen lamps are lit, and the *pooja* is performed in the traditional way by pouring out libations of water presenting flowers and sandal paste, and finally offering the sweets in the sacred fire in the name of the deity who is worshipped on the ritual. This is followed by the recitation of sacred texts and singing of devotional hymns, and the distribution of the food offering (*prasad*).

V

To the common villager, Hinduism is more a way of life. It does involve some active worship, occasional visits and gift giving to temples, and observance of the annual fasts and feasts in the appropriate way. But more than that, for a Hindu, his *dharma*, prescribes what he should do and what he must not do. The latter, that is, the ritual prohibitions are more important to him since they constitute the charter for his everyday actions.

In the first category, that is, the ritual prescriptions, come such things as solemnizations and pilgrimages, giving of alms and gifts, and paying due respect to the Brahmin and other priestly castes. Thus, village Hindus are required to perform birth, sacred thread-giving, marriage, pregnancy and funeral rites in accordance with traditional rules. Of course, many of these rules vary from caste to caste and often from family to family, but the usual variations are only slight and often superficial. For instance, all Hindus observe some pollution on occasions of birth and death, though whether the pollution extends to the family circle or to the agnatic kin or to the entire kindred, and the actual number of days for which pollution is observed varies. Among the Rajput, for instance, death pollution

affect the entire patrilineage of the deceased, whereas among the Malwi Brahmin, only the family members and near agnatic kin are involved in the ritual pollution caused by parturition and death. The Rajput observe death pollution and mourning for forty days, the Malwi Brahmin for thirteen days, the Khati and Mali for ten days, and certain 'unclean' Shudra caste like Malwi Balai, Malwi Chamar and Nath Jogi for three to seven days.

Similar is the case with menstrual pollution. In some measures all Hindus consider their women as impure during their menses. This is probably because of the fundamental Hindu religious belief that all bodily emissions (like saliva, perspiration, urine, faeces, menstrual blood and semen) are impure and polluting. But the actual observance of the taboos on menstruating women varies, in the number of days for which the pollution is observed and the restrictions the woman concerned suffers from. In this respect too, the Brahmin and Bania castes are the most rigid. In rural Malwa, Brahmin and Bania (both Vaishnava and Jain) women observe menstrual pollution for a minimum of five days or for as many days as the flow actually lasts. During this period, they are required to remain in secluded quarters: *they may not take a bath, cook food and attend religious* observances ; and on no account must they meet or sleep with their husbands. At the conclusion of the period, they have to take an elaborate purificatory bath to attain their normal ritual status.

Rajput women in Malwa do observe the menstrual pollution and taboos, but not with such rigidity as the Brahmin and Bania women do. They observe the pollution for three to four days and then keep on doing their domestic work ; only they may not cook—during this period--for guests and offerings to deities. The Khati have only recently started observing menstrual pollution with any degree of seriousness. Many Khati women openly ridicule the very idea and say it is a sheer waste of time and human energy for a woman to sit idle for a few days every month during her reproductive life. Among the 'unclean' Shudra castes, like the Balai, the Dhobi, the Teli, and the Dholi, there is very little evidence that such a taboo is observed at all though a few women from these castes assert that they do so. The caste elders, however, are definite that it is not a custom of the Shudra castes, and that it is enough for a woman to take a bath every day during her menstruation.

Rites and observances of the second category, that is, the prohibitive ones are much more important. These are related to the Hindu theory of pollution and are in reference with the ritual status of a person. According to the theory of caste which is one of the funda-

mental principles of Hindu social organization, the ritual status of a person is decided according to his caste, that is, his personal ritual status is the same as the ritual status of the caste to which he belongs. According to the prescriptions of the *dharma*, he is required to observe rules of his caste strictly, in order that his *karma* stock remains steady or there is some credit entry and he is able to get a better form in the next incarnation. Every Hindu believes in the doctrine of *karma* and *punarjanma* (transmigration of souls) and regards it as an active principle in the making of human destiny. Thus in order to improve his *karma* stock he is prepared to circumscribe his actions within the boundries set by his caste traditions ; that, so far as he is concerned, is his immediate *dharma*. The sanskrit idiom "that is the right path which has been trodden by great men" is taken to mean that the traditions of ones own caste are *the* right traditions for one to follow.

Caste rules lay emphasis on a "right behaviour" by their members. Particularly in matters of matrimony, sex relations, eating, drinking and smoking and in respect of friendship and visits, caste rules lay down the correct behaviour for their members.

Almost all castes require their members to marry within the caste, that is, castes are by rule endogamous. This requirement is for the purpose of maintaining the solidarity of the caste. Inter-caste marriages are still a rare phenomenon in villages, though they are becoming popular in many of our cities and towns. In villages, people still care to take their spouses from amongst their own caste members.

This is regarded with such sacredness and rigidity that inter-caste marriages cannot be performed while the persons live in their village environment. Also, since no Brahmin priest in villages would be willing to perform such a marriage, it can only be performed in a court of law according to the civil procedure or in an Arya Samaj temple which in Malwa are to be found only in towns. The result is that almost all marriages that one comes across in villages are intra-caste marriages. The punishment for offenders of the rules of caste endogamy are very harsh. They are summarily ex-communicated and are seldom re-admitted, so that they and their children have to be outside of the caste fold.

In matters of eating and drinking also each caste has its own rules, and if these rules are violated the caste council steps in to take severe action. In such cases they usually do not ex-communicate the offender, but demand of him a eating or drinking party and occasionally a contribution to the caste funds which may be utilised for the building of temples and dharamshalas or digging of wells and

such other charitable purposes as the caste council may decide upon. One significant thing in this connection is that these rules are applied only while the persons live in their village envinornment. It is found that when these same villagers visited towns like Indore, Ujjain and Dewas, they suspended the observance of the caste rules about eating and drinking for the duration they were in the town.

These social rules are invested with ritual properties and sanctions by the Hindu society and *dharma*. Even though these are not concerned with actual worship, prayer or meditation, their observance is regarded as a ritual necessity by the Hindus and their violation leads to punishment or even ex communication by the caste. The fact is that these rules and conventions are much more important for the persistance of the society in the traditionally integrated way and hence they are given by religious traditions the same sanction as is given to the formal religious rites and practices.

Chart showing the annual cycle of festivals

Month	Fort-night.	Date of the fortnight	Festival	Castes who observe
Chet	1st	poonam	Samvatsar	Brahmin
	2nd	ekam to nomi (9 days)	Mata Poojan and Bari	Desha Chamar
		ekam to teej (3 days)	Gangor*	'Clean' Castes
		nomi	Ram nomi	'Clean' Castes
Baisakh	1st			
	2nd	teej	Akhati	'Clean' Castes
Jeth	1st	ammavas	Bar mavas*	Purabi Thakur
	2nd	satam	Bar satam*	Purabi Thakur
		dashmi	Ganga dashmi	All castes
		poonam	Bheru pooja	All castes
		poonam	Ram nam	'Clean' Castes
Asadh	1st	gyaras	Dev soni	'Clean' Castes
		gyaras	Hari a Goondiya	'Clean' Castes
	2nd			
Sawan	1st	ammavas	Hariya Goondiya	'Clean' Castes
		ammavas	Dewasa*	'Clean' and 'Unclean' castes
	2nd	panchami	Nag pooja	All Castes
		poonam	Rakhi	All Castes
Bhadon	1st	teej	Hariyali*	'Clean' Castes
		atham	Krishna janam	'Clean' Castes
	2nd	beej	Bhai beej	All Castes
		teej	Hartalika*	'Clean' Castes
		choth	Ganesh pooja	'Clean' Castes
		panchami	Rishi panchami	'Clean' Castes
		chat	Hal chat	'Clean' Castes
		dashmi	Teja ji ki Jatra	All Castes
		gyaras	Dol gyaras	'Clean' Castes
		chodas	Anant chodas	Brahmin

Month	Fort-night.	Date of the fortnight	Festival	Castes who observe
Kuar	1st	ekam to ammavas (15 days)	Pitar paksha	'Clean' & 'Un-clean' castes
	2nd	ekem to nomi (9 days)	Bari poojan	Malwi Balai & Gujarati Balai
		teej to nomi (7 days)	Mata pooja	All Castes
		dashmi	Daserah	All Castes
		gyaras to poonam	Keli pooja	'Clean' Castes
		poonam	Garba*	All Castes
Katik	1st	atham	Karva atham*	Brahmin
		teras	Dhan teras	Brahmin and Palliwal Bania
		chodas	Narak chodas	All Castes
		ammavas	Dewali	All Castes
	2nd	ekam	Annakot-Gobardhan	'Clean' Castes
		atham	Gopashthami	'Clean' Castes
		nomi	Aonia nomi*	Brahmin
		gyaras	Deva uthni	'Clean' Castes
		poonam	Katik jatra	All Castes
Aghan	1st			
	2nd			
Poos	1st			
	2nd			
Magh	1st			
	2nd	panchami	Basant	'Clean' Castes
Phagun	1st	teras	Siva Ratri	Brahmin, Palliwal Bania, Gosain, Nath Jogi
	2nd	poonam	Holi	All Castes
		poonam	Mahadev Baba ki jatra	All Castes

*For women exclusively.

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HERATH : A RELIGIOUS RITUAL AND ITS SECULAR ASPECT

T. N. Madan

I

The indigenous Hindus of the Valley of Kashmir are Saraswat Brahmans[1]. They call themselves the Batta (बट्ट) and are known all over India, outside Kashmir, as Kashmiri Pandits. Batta is derived from the Sanskrit *bhatta* (भट्ट) meaning 'doctor', the designation of great scholars ; and *pandit* (पंडित) is the Sanskrit equivalent for 'scholar' or 'learned man'.

The domestic life of the Pandits is characterized by the performance of many rituals, secular as well as religious[2]. The Pandit domestic religious rituals may be classified according to their aim-content (intended purpose). The majority of these rituals commemorate some mythological event. The Pandits believe that the performance of such rituals increases the ritual merit of the performers, averts untoward happennings and brings about divine blessings such as progeny, prosperity, health and happiness.

II

The most prominent and elaborate of the domestic religious rituals of the Pandits is *herath* (derived from the Sanskrit *hararatri* meaning 'Shiva's night'). The occasion is also celebrated all over India by Hindus as Shivaratri (Shiva's night) on the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Phalgun (February—March). There are several versions of the mythological event which is celebrated on this occasion current among the Pandits. The Pandits are not worried by this lack of unanimity, nor does it abate their enthusiasm for the ritual. The most common popular version is that the god Shiva was married on this day (of the lunar calendar). In a village in South Kashmir[3] I was told the homely story of how Shiva once quarrelled with his spouse Paravati, who ran away from home and concealed herself in Sondar-nar, a gorge somewhere in the Valley. Shiva, repentant for his irascible temper, went searching for her. Other gods (with remarkable fellow feeling !) came to his aid and he was finally reunited with Paravati on this day (of the year). Whereas the laity are satisfied with their own 'little tradition', the learned *literati* rely upon Sanskrit texts and the 'great all-India Hindu tradition'. The significance of this holy day is explained in several sacred texts including *Dharma Chintamani* and *Harihar Vasar Vinod* (see

Shastri *et al* 1957). A Hindi commentary on the Sanskrit texts is also available (Bhatta 1931). It is written in the last mentioned of these books that when the world was created for human habitation Shiva looked for Shakti (his female counterpart) and, being omniscient, found that she was in a Himalayan forest, accompanied by her self-created female attendants (*yoginiyan*), preparing various utilities and foods for the sustenance of human life. Shiva assumed a five-face, fifteen-eye, eighteen-arm form and appeared in front of Shakti, whose attendants were so frightened that they ran away. Shakti was greatly annoyed and she looked in anger at an earthenware vessel which she had made for holding water. As a consequence of her angry wish an armed warrior arose out of the vessel, and he was followed by another armed but beautiful, rather than awesome, warrior who arose out of another vessel. The two warriors attacked Shiva but he took to his heels and vanished. Shakti blessed the two youths, whom she called Vataka and Rama, had them fed, and ordained that mankind should worship them on every anniversary of the day of their birth. Shiva wanted to be united to Shakti (without which happening there would be no mankind), and so he reappeared on the scene as a phallus of fire (*jwalalinga*). Vataka and Rama went up into the sky and down into the earth respectively but failed to find the two ends of the phallus. Their pride was vanquished and they fell in prayer before it. Shakti absorbed into herself all her female companions and then was absorbed into the phallus. Shiva was thus united to Shakti. This is the event which is celebrated yearly by the Pandits as *herath*.

III

The religious rites on this occasion consist of offering prayerful praise, *arati* (waving of lighted lamps, incense and bells in front of an object of worship to the accompaniment of conch-blowing), flowers and food to Shiva, Shakti, Vataka and Rama represented respectively by a phallus made of baked clay and three earthen vessels containing water and walnuts. On the twelfth day of the fortnight Rama is worshipped in the morning. The next day the male head of every Pandit household observes a fast for the day and in the evening offers worship to Shiva, Shakti and Vataka. Several other gods and godlings also are worshipped on both days. On the morning of the fourteenth day there is a brief rite of offering prayer, bread and *arati*. The last rite takes place on the evening of the last day of the fortnight after sunset. The vessels are carried to a river, stream or spring and worshipped there. The water is then poured out but the walnuts

are retained. These walnuts, regarded as sacred, are taken back home and eaten and distributed among kin and kith. The ritual being over, all the vessels and other earthen utensils are put to domestic use. Small saucers and the phallus are given to children who consider them as toys.

IV

The religious rites on the occasion of *herath* last four days. No other religious ritual commemorating an event in the life of gods is celebrated by the Pandits over as many days. For this reason alone *herath* stands out as the preeminent religious ritual in the Pandit calendar. But there is another reason also which invests *herath* with its unique importance. *Herath* is also the occasion for several secular activities and social transactions. These activities and transactions, spread over more than a fortnight, are to the Pandits an essential part of the celebration of *herath*. The secular activities associated with this occasion bring about a pronounced change in social interaction between kith and kin. Not only is there an increase in the rate of social interaction but there is also an emotional appeal which these activities have for young and old alike, so much so that every Pandit always looks forward to *herath* with enthusiasm. Let us now describe the more important of these secular activities and social transactions.

(1) **Spring Cleaning.** The winter in the Valley of Kashmir is long, cold and wet. The months of December, January and February are the coldest ; a lot of snow falls and there are frequent frosts. Although the winter continues well into the month of March, the worst is usually over by the end of February, i. e. about the same time as *herath*. The months immediately preceeding *herath* witness the Pandits retiring into a shell of inactivity, their main concern being to keep themselves warm and protected from cold. This is not a simple task in a society which does not know of centrally heated houses and geysers. The city (of Srinagar) and the towns are electrified but the villages do not have even this facility. Consequently domestic cleanliness, and to a certain extent personal cleanliness also, are neglected during these two or three months. The coming of *herath* means that the worst is over and it is time for house cleaning. This is done invariably (and almost formally) during the first nine days of the dark fortnight of the month of Phalgun (in the second half of February) The Pandit house is a big structure. It is a three or four-storeyed building with three to four rooms on each floor. The mud plaster floors are covered by matting. To clean the

house the mats have to be removed from the rooms and beaten with sticks to rid them of dust. The rooms are then swept and washed with water and brown clay. The walls are also similarly washed. As each room is cleaned, all the things taken out of it are restored into their former places. The whole house is agog with activity and everybody lends a helping hand to the women on whom the brunt of the burden falls. In the city and the towns well-to-do families have the cleaning done by their servants or by hired labourers. The latter are invariably Muslims. But the sacred rooms in the Pandit house, viz. the kitchens and the 'worship-room' cannot be entered by Muslims as their touch is polluting. Even in those houses where servants are entrusted with the main task of sweeping and washing, women of the household supervise their work. The women who take part in this work are the daughters-in-law of many years' standing. Recently married women spend this time in their parental homes.

After the house, utensils are cleaned, followed by the washing of linen and other clothes. This is followed by the long personal baths. It takes a Pandit woman well over an hour to clean the mess out of her long hair neglected for several weeks. The cleaning is completed by the eighth day.

(2) **Home-Coming.** Every married woman visits her parental family on this occasion. As already stated, women recently married do not participate in the house-cleaning activities of their conjugal family. Others, of longer standing, take part in the cleaning activities for a few days and then go to their natal households. Even women who have been married many years and have grown-up children pay this visit to their natal homes, although it may last only a day, unless illness, distance (this holds good only in the countryside) or some extraordinary reason prevents them from doing so. This visit is regarded as auspicious.

(3) **Return of the Wives.** Every woman goes back to her conjugal household on the ninth or the tenth day (of the fortnight). She receives gifts in cash and kind from her parents, or her brothers if the parents are dead. A young woman receives more gifts than an older woman. The minimum that even a grown-up woman receives is a *khrav* (pair of wooden sandals), a *kangar* (firepot),[4] some loaves of bread and a few rupees in cash. However, old women who have only brothers younger than themselves living in their natal household may not receive any gift. If it is the first *herath* after marriage, then a woman receives many gifts including new clothes.

(4) **Ritual Gambling.** Early in the fortnight children are given small cowrie shells by their parents, who buy these in the market.

Each child gets a few dozen, and they play various games among themselves. All these games are regarded as gambling because the element of chance is decisive in winning or losing. Thus in one of the games every child contributes four cowries and then a toss decides who shall start the play. The child who wins the toss, picks up the cowries in his hands, closes the hands palm to palm, shakes the cowries between his palms, and then throws them on the floor. If an odd number of shells lie on the top side he wins all, if an even number he loses all, and has to pay a penalty. Schools remain closed in Kashmir during the winter and therefore all children, young and grown-up, are able to take part in these games. They enjoy themselves not only because they play, but also because such play is not permitted at any other time of the year. The Pandits lay a very great emphasis on prudence in matters pertaining to money, and therefore regard gambling with extreme abhorrence. They also believe in strict disciplining of children. But during this fortnight the child who shows rashness and skill in winning in the games is much praised in a lighthearted manner.

Adults take quite some interest in these games, and, if not earlier, then definitely on the tenth day they join the children in these games. This is a real climax. The Pandits have not heard of Freud and believe firmly in the time honoured maxim of 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. In every-day life there is no show of friendly equality between parents and children. The parents are unmistakably the disciplinarians of their children. A parent may fondle his infant child and play with him, but as the child grows older there is a marked diminution in such behaviour, particularly so far as fathers are concerned. The Pandit men are not given to a free show of affection for their children. Consequently the children do not think of their parents as their playmates. But once in the year, on the occasion of *herath*, the barrier between the generations breaks down. Children play with their parents; they gamble, and accuse their parents of cheating; and when a parent is caught in the act of cheating or is defeated, the children laugh out of sheer pure joy. And the parents join them. Every Pandit child carries fond memories of these days throughout the year to sustain him through less pleasant days. Many a Pandit will recall nostalgically how decades ago he used to play cowrie-shell games with his father.

The daughter-in-law who is spending her first *herath* with her conjugal family gets several hundred cowries with her from her parental home. On arrival in the home of her parents-in-law she is invited by her husband's siblings to play with them. The game begins

and soon others may join in with the purpose of obtaining all the cowries from the new daughter-in-law. To make her 'cowrie-less', 'bankrupt', is the Pandits' idea of an excellent joke. A Pandit daughter-in-law who has been recently married (less than a year ago) is expected to be very reserved in her relations with her affines. However, on the occasion of *herath* she is faced with a dilemma: either she observes the norms of etiquette and allows herself to be humiliated by being deprived of all her cowries, or she becomes a bit bold, abandons some reserve and plays with caution. Most girls choose the former course, although they try to protect themselves from humiliation by carrying a large number of cowries with them. A kind of mock hostility, the desire to humiliate, is exhibited towards the new daughter-in-law on this occasion probably to emphasize her *position as a partial stranger in the family.*

Actual gambling between adult men, involving money (cowries are very cheap, 'worthless as a cowrie' being a common saying), may also take place on this tenth day, but this is rare.

Children are admonished if they continue playing cowrie games after the fortnight is over, and cowries may be taken away from them to be kept in stock for the next year. In most cases children lose their cowries and the few that are left are thrown away.

(5) **The Potter's Burden.** On the eleventh day the potter (invariably a Muslim), who supplies pottery to a number of fixed households on a hereditary basis, brings pots, vessels and other requirements of earthenware of his clients. Most of these earthen vessls and objects are needed for the performance of religious rites and for use in the kitchen. The potter brings them in a huge basket on his head. His burden is not merely a head-load: he must bring the load on the right day and he must bring all the things required on the occasion. If any of the important objects, particularly any one to be used in the religious rites, is missing, he gets a scolding because such an omission on his part is regarded as a bad omen. The Muslim potter, no observer of *herath* and no believer, nor a literate person either, has to take great care in remembering the requirements of each of his client-households. The mutual interdependence of the Hindu and the Muslim is demonstrated on this as on many other occasions.

(6) **The Priest's Dismay.** Every Pandit household have available to them, on hereditary basis, the services of a priestly family who attend to their needs on ritual occasions such as births, deaths, *marriages* and *propitiation rites.* The male members of a priest household are able to look after all their client households with

ease on all occasions except on the thirteenth day of the fortnight when the main *herath* ritual, the worship of Shiva, Shakti and Vataka is performed. Not all Pandit households perform the ritual on the morning of the twelfth day ; they perform the worship of Rama also on the thirteenth day. The priests are not therefore put to any considerable trouble on that day. However, on the thirteenth day every Pandit household, without exception, perform the religious rites, and the presence of the priest is necessary because the priests alone know how to perform these rites. Moreover, every household want to perform the rites between sunset (about 6 p. m.) and mid-night, the 'phallus of fire' having appeared, according to the mythological story, soon after sunset and disappeared at mid-night. A priest often finds it difficult to reach all his client-households before midnight. In the city a priest's client-households may be only four or five miles apart, but in the countryside they may be farther apart and in two or more villages. The delay in the performance of the rites becomes an ordeal. Not only is worship after midnight regarded as less meritorious, but the members of the household also suffer from hunger and lack of sleep because no food may be eaten unless the rites have been performed. The priest receives gifts in cash and kind for the service he renders. The members of such households where he reaches late angrily remonstrate with him. A priest told me of how he once heard curses being invoked upon him as he entered a house well after mid-night. In the past when there was no electricity in the city the priests, running from one street to another in the pitch-dark night, were often attacked by stray dogs or even thieves.

(7) **Feasting, Dancing and Exchange of Gifts.** *Herath* is the festive occasion *par excellence.* Feasting begins on the eleventh day when fish[5] must be cooked. The midday meal on the twelfth day and the evening meal on the thirteenth are also occasions for family feasts. The midday meal on the fourteenth day is, however, the principal feasting occassion. Fish and mutton are served with rice ; those who can afford may also cook jungle fowls, ducks or other game. Brahmans all over India observe vegetarianism on this occasion, even those Brahmans who may not be vegetarians, but the Kashmiri Brahmans (the Pandits) are a law unto themselves.

The midday meal over, Pandit women of every neighbourhood collect together to dance and sing (in the open if it is sunny or dry). This practice of collective dancing and singing has died out in the city where it is regarded as typically rustic.

From early in the morning every Pandit household is visited by their Muslim acquiantances who bring them gifts in kind to receive

back gifts in cash. The potter brings a smoking pipe, the carpenter a pair of wooden sandals, the black-smith a knife, the basketweaver a basket, the milkman a jar of curd, and so on. Others like tenants and washerman come to offer greetings. All these people visit the houses of only such Pandit families who are their patrons, and receive gifts of money. In Srinager beggars (Hindu and Muslim) and itinerant Muslim dancers and clowns also visit Pandit households indiscriminately to receive small gifts of money. Kith and kin also call on each other to exchange greetings. Children receive pocket money from their parents and from their mother's natal family. A newly married girl, her husband and parents-in-law receive gifts in cash and kind from her parents.

The concluding religious rites are performed, as already stated, on the evening of the fifteenth (and the last) day of the fortnight. During the following week every household send loaves of bread and walnuts to all the households of their close kin, affines, neighbours and friends In a hamlet the gift may be sent to every other Pandit household, related or unrelated. The gift is called *herach-bogh*, 'the share of the *herath*'. The *herach-bogh* is portion of the walnuts and bread consecrated during the ritual performance on the thirteenth day. The closer their relationship, or the more intimate their mutual relations, the more the number of loaves of bread and walnuts sent by one household to another. If any family who have been sent such gifts in the past are not sent the gifts in a certain year, the import of the omission, whether deliberate or not, is serious. There will be complaints, and if no apology is forthcoming, retaliation the next year. This then amounts to severence of social intercourse (*vartav chatun*). Not to send *herach-bogh* is to deny the obligations associated with kinship or friendship. No household, therefore, takes such a decision without sufficient cause. The exchange of *herach-bogh* (like the exchange of Christmas cards in English society) stands for the reaffirmation of mutual interest, particularly between distantly related households between whom there may be little other regular social intercourse. The man who carries *herach bogh* (well-to-do families may employ a servant for this purpose, particularly in contacting households who live far away) also carries with him news about the weal and woe of his own household, conveys greetings and makes enquiries about the welfare of the families he visits. The web of kinship (and friendship) is thus strengthened. And if Firth's statement about kinship being 'the rod of life on which one leans throughout life' is true of any society it is, as we have shown elsewhere (Madan 1959), true of the Pandit society.

V

In the foregoing description of *herath* we have emphasized the secular activities because they are of far greater functional or sociological importance than the religious rites. Only the head of a household is directly involved in these rites as it is he who offers worship to the gods on behalf of the household. In the secular activities every member of the household—man and woman, child and adult—takes part. It may be maintained that the secular activities have no necessary relation with the religious ritual ; they have an independence of their own and are not an aspect of the religious ritual. It is analytically possible to separate the two, but doing so would not only do violence to the reality but preclude a full understanding of the sociological significance of *herath*[6]. Looking for the trees one is apt to miss the forest. The basic fact is that the Pandits themselves do not make this distinction. Careful enquires have revealed that when they talk of *herath* it is the whole complex of activities, religious as well as secular, that is in their mind. However, it is the religious ritual of commemorating Shiva's union with Shakti (and the consequent birth of mankind) which occupies the central place in these activities. *Herath* is a religious ritual with a highly elaborate and socially important secular aspect.

The social importance of the secular activities lies in the fact that they are in effect the reaffirmation of social solidarity—between gods and human beings, kin, affines, parents and children, neighbours, co-villagers and friends. Even the Muslims with whom the Pandits engage in economic transactions participate in this mutual affirmation of social solidarity. The fortnight of *herath* is a time of intense social activities and religious performances. Not only is there an increase in the rate of social interaction , the quality of interaction also changes furnishing emotional stimulation. The Pandits live in close contact to each other and also in a sense to the Divine Being who, they believe, created and sustains mankind. It is an occasion when social (secular) transactions are merged with religious rituals in their experience.

Nadel (1954 : 259-65) has mentioned four main 'competences' of religion, viz , explanation of the universe, economic ethics ('competence to guide 'the practical impulses of action"), support of social structure, and 'specific experiences and stimulations'. This brief ethnographic essay has indirectly been an attempt to show that the beliefs and the religious and secular actions associated with *herath* partly fulfil these functions, and do so in a remarkable manner consi-

dering the fact that *herath* is not the whole of Pandit religion but only one of its major rituals.

NOTES

1 Some *Pandits* say that Saraswat Brahmans are all those Brahmans who live west of the underground river Saraswati, mentioned in the *puranas*, which joins the Ganga and the Yamuna at Prayag. However the majority of Pandits whom I questioned about this said that the Saraswat Brahmans of Kashmir are different from, and 'of course' (!) superior to other Saraswat Brahmans They are the *bhatta*, they say of themselves, the favoured of Saraswati the goddess of learning.

2 To limit the use of the term 'ritual' to religious or sacred situations only is now out of date The term 'religious ritual' is used by Radcliffe-Brown, Nadel, Firth and others Benedict writes 'Ritual . is a prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technogical routine. The occasions which are ritualistically elaborated are usually solemn and are often therefore *religious*, but many secular occasions are similarly elaborated' (1934 · 396). Firth has phrased the issue aptly and succinctly : 'Ritual may be defined as a kind of patterned activity oriented towards control of human affairs, primarily symbolic in character with a non-empirical referent, and as a rule socially sanctioned. When we are speaking of religious ritual in particular, the non empirical referent is ordinarily a god or other spiritual being or super-human force such as *mana*' (1951 · 222).

3 Part of the data used in this paper were collected by me in 1957 when I was doing fieldwork in Kashmir as a Scholar of the Australian National University to whom thanks are here expressed for financial support.

4 The *kangar* is a clay pot in a wicker container which is filled with charcoal fire and used by Kashmiris to keep themselves warm Every individual has his own *kangar*.

5 It is not quite clear why such a great emphasis is laid on the consumption of fish. The only explanation which I was given by the Pandits is that since fish are omnivorous, eating fish is very satisfying (in a mystical way).

6 In this connexion it is well worth pondering over what Firth has recently said : '. the search for meaning, for the social anthropologist, is a two fold process. He is concerned to discover the set of meanings within the religious system itself and also the correlates of the religious system with other aspects of the social system, and with the most general problems of society' (1959 : 133).

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THE CULT OF BHERU IN A MEWAR VILLAGE AND ITS VICINAGE

Yogesh Atal

The ritual idiom of a village can best be understood when its varied ramifications are taken into account. These ramifications termed as 'Spread' by Srinivas (1952) have either an all-India character, or are regionally important, or are local in origin and limited in spread. The deity of Bheru in its generic sense has a regional spread in Mewar and its cult is the most effective vinculum joining many villages of the vicinage into a common core of ritual usages. The cult of Bheru is all-pervading and effective of all. People look towards it for remedial measures of diverse human problems. This deity has several abodes even within a single village with specialised functions to perform. Likewise, some of the Bherus of other villages have earned a fame for something or the other and therefore attract pilgrims from distant villages. The various manifestations of the same deity suggest its multifarious functions and account for its popularity and specialisation.

This paper describes the important Bherus of a Mewar village and its vicinage with reference to their specialised functions and mode of worship. A comparison is made with the Bheru worship of a Malwa village and a brief discussion on the problem of conceptualising the data is attempted towards the end.

I

The Mewar village of 501 people understudy has thirteen important shrines of Bheru. Besides them, there are other minor representations which are restricted in their range of influence and spread of popularity. In fact, any stone marked with vermilion and unidentifiable as any particular deity will be explained by the people as "some sort of Bheru". In the religious experience of an average villager, the fear of Bheru, and reverence toward it, are invariably present irrespective of caste considerations.

While describing the characteristics of Bhil villages in Rajasthan, Carstairs wrote about the village shrine : "Indeed every........ village has its separate Devra, a small roofless hut, in which are placed a row of images of Dharam Raj, Kala nag, Bhairav and one or other mataji. These images are of baked clay, and brightly painted". (Carstairs, 1957 . 130-31) With the exception of one, all

the shrines of Bheru in the village of present study are roofless. The platforms of different shrines differ in their size and number of images. In three of the bigger shrines are found all images described by Carstairs, whereas other shrines of Bheru are marked with single stones chromed with lead oxide. The iconographic detail of the deity is, however, difficult to be described, since no standardised icon is found.

Below I describe some of the important Bherus of the village.

1. **Gadariyaji Bavji.** This Bheru is thought to be most prosilient and omniscient of all the Bherus of the village and it can be called the lord of the village. The chief-attendant of the deity (Bhopaji) hails from the Giary (shepherd) caste. His position is hereditary. Gadariyaji has its two abodes. Its main shrine is located at about a furlong's distance from the village. The miniature manifestation of the same Bheru is kept in the house of the Bhopa. For minor ailments and immediate consultations on the days other than Saturday and Sunday (when the deity arrives at the main shrine), and at odd times people go to Bhopa's house and request him to invite the deity.

Regarding the origin of this Bheru it is said that once the Shahi fauz (Royal army) of some Mughal emperor was passing by. At a place one of the carts stopped and became stationary. On the suggestion of few, they recognised this happening as an indication of some deity. This deity was beseeched and appeased with proper offertory. It is only then that the cart could move. So the deity came into being. Since it was in the cart-track (gadar) it was designated as Gadariyaji.

It is told that some 150 years ago a man from the Adi Gaur Brahman caste, resident of a neighbouring village did reading of a book 'Batka Bheru' for six months in this shrine. On the concluding day of his 'path' (reading), he brought with him a kalal (liquor extractor) and a Khatik (butcher). Both were seated outside the shrine. At about midnight the deity appeared Himself and cried 'La-la' (give-give). The Kalal gave the offering of liquor, but the Khatik went asleep and so at that critical moment the worshipper cut his own finger and offered it to the deity, which the latter swallowed. After this deity bequeathed him with sortilege and children. Then He disappeared.

2. **Ghati Ka Bheru.** This Bheru is located on the slope of a hill and hence the adjective of Ghati (lit—vale). This deity is worshipped by a Giary family on every Saturday. It does not carry with it a 'halo' like the first one but is quite significant. Once when

the shrine of Gadariyaji got burnt by an accidental fire, the cause was sought from this Bheru and on His instructions people took the action.

3. **Goraji Bavji.** This deity has its abode in the fields of a Gujar *(pastoralcaste) and is worshipped by a Mehtar* (Tanner). Goraji literally means the 'fair' Bheru.

All these three shrines described above have ceremonial wake of the night (Jagaran) biannually; the only difference being that the latter two shrines hold it a day later than the first one's Jagaran night.

4. **Bhaderiyaji.** It is a representation of a Bheru of Bhadesar —a nearby village, which also happens to be a tehsil centre. This Bheru is represented only by a stone and is worshipped at the time of marriage. No particular Bhopa is associated with this shrine.

5. **Chandkiyaji.** This is also worshipped at the time of wedding by the groom or the bride, as the case may be. Its name is derived from the loaf (chandkiyo) that is offered to him during his worship.

6. **Ghas Bheru.** It is worshipped during Diwali. On the next day of Diwali, village people have the festival of *Khekhra*, when the cattle are worshipped. In the evening, after the cattle-worship is over, the village Patel goes to the shrine of Ghas Bheru with the beat of drum and is followed up by some villagers including the members of the tanner caste (Mehtars). After the worship, the patel distributes *Bakla* (boiled grains) to the lower caste people. The Mehtar put their feet on the *Ghisoda* (a wooden sledge) and sing *Lal Keshyo.* After eleven days, on Lodi Diwali, people go again to the Ghas Bheru. This deity is then seated on the *ghisoda* and carried round the village, after which it is brought back and located at a place slightly away from the previous seat.

7 & 8. **Ganga Ka Bheru** and **Pathwari Ka Bheru.** These two Bherus could be described as the Bherus of the pilgrimage. It is the peculiarity of a Mewar village to have *Pathwaris* on the outerskirts of the village. Pathwaris are rectangular erections of stone or mud with a height of 3 to 4 feet. These are the deities of the path. Whenever people go out for pilgrimages they worship Pathwaris and people of the village see them off here. While returning from the pilgrimage they stay near the pathwaris and send a word to the villagers, who come to welcome them. They are taken to the village in a procession. The stone at the feet of the Pathwaris is considered to be its Bheru, which is worshipped on such occasions. Moreover, when people return from a visit to the holy Ganga, a special ceremony is arranged

at a convenient time which is known as *Dangdi* and *Gangoj*. During this ceremony a feast is given to the caste-members of the *Chokhla* (inter-village caste-organisation). At this time again Pathwari's Bheru is worshipped, and Ganga Ka Bheru is also invoked, though no image of the latter is installed in the village. Songs are sung in praise of Ganga Ka Bheru and many women get possessed.

9. **Ragatiya Bheru.** This is a Bheru associated with the Giary caste (shepherds) and is worshipped at the time of birth of a male child. This is done on the very day the child is delivered. *Ragatiya* is the local name of the disease of 'rickets'. It is supposed that the worship of this Bheru provides them security against this disease. 1¼ seer of wheat-mash (rava) is boiled with ¼ seer of Gur to make *lapsi*. This *lapsi* alongwith boiled rice is offered to this Bheru with the burning of an incense. This Bheru has no shrine of its own and the families worshipping it burn incense, and offer food in the direction in which Gadariyaji Bavji is located. It is significant to note that other castes do not worship this deity and the pregnant women of other castes avoid touch of Giary women, especially the Gujar women. Whenever any case of rickets occur in their family then they seek protection from the Bheru of the village Ghoda Khera. They also perform a totka (magical ritual). An infant he-goat is sacrificed within the compound of the house and buried there. With this they also burn incense to appease the Ragatiya Bheru

In addition to these important representations of the deity in the village, there are other minor varieties of the same species known as Agariya Bheru, Da Bavji, Vakliya Bavji, Khankharaji etc. It has also been stated earlier that the cult of Bheru accounts for an inter-village network. The Bherus of the vicinage which are popular for their specific functions and are worshipped by the people of the village understudy are relevant to deserve a treatment here.

1. **Joheda Bavji.** This Bheru has its shrine in a village 24 miles distant. Joheda Bavji is a specialist deity in cattle-diseases. Its worship is a triennial ritual. For the safeguard of the cows and calves a feast is arranged of one and quarter maund of wheat flour at its shrine where a few persons of the village go to prepare the feast and worship the deity. On that very day a feast is also arranged in the village itself and incense is offered to Joheda Bavji. Though the feast is arranged on behalf of the village, contributions are raised only among Bada Paliwal (Brahman caste), Gujar and Giary (numerically dominant and primarily agricultural castes of the village).

2. **Ghoda Khera Ka Bheru.** Ghoda Khera is only 3 miles apart from the village of present study. The Bheru of this village is

specialist in children's diseases and is also popular for giving children to the wanting parents. Whenever there are cases of this variety, this Bheru is approached on Sundays, when it has its ceremonial visit to the shrine

3. **Bhamrashyaji Bavji.** The Bheru of village Bhamrashya, 20 miles distant, is famous for the cure of dog-bite. A *Jevdi* (enchanted thread) is given to be tied on the infected part of the body and it is believed that it has its effect. The Bheru prescribes and proscribes certain types of food and activities to the patients.

4. **Bhaderiyaji.** In the village of Bhader (Bhadesar) this Bheru has its main abode. This Bheru is supposed to be Patvi (senior most) and other Bherus of the neighbourhood are its representatives since the flame (jot) of the lamp of this shrine is carried whenever a new shrine has to be established. It is said that this Bheru was very notorious for *utmat* (naughtiness and atrocity). It used to break the water-pots of women by pelting stones on them. Once a powerful man tied it with an iron chain and hanged it in the well. Since then it is hanging there. The minor manifestation is, however, placed outside where a *jot* is kept burnt round the clock throughout the year.

II

Bheru is alleged to have the powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience. He specializes as a diagnostician of diseases and prognosticator of coming events. He safeguards the interests of his pilgrims, cures the diseased, gives the issueless family a 'cradle' ('Palno Bandhave') i e. to endow with a child ; in brief, his worship is an insurance against all evils and beneficiary in all events.

The popular Bherus have their own Bhopas and Hajurias (yesmen of the Bhopas). The Bhopa wears a silver amulet having an inscription of Bheru. Bherus are weekly worshipped on Saturdays or Sundays or both the days. On these 'chauki' days the Bhopa of Gadariyaji is accompanied by the Hajuria. The village Drummer (Dholi) also reaches there. At about 2 p.m. people begin coming there and when enough people are present the Bhopa goes inside the shrine and the drummer beats the drum. With the continued increase of the beat of the drum, and smoke of the incense burnt, the Bhopa emerges into trance. He is thus possessed by the Bheru. After he is completely possessed he howls loudly and bows to the small platform (chauki) and then sits over it. He takes an iron chain and beats his back with it. People then pay respect to the visiting deity by genuflecting or prostrating. They exclaim *Annadata*-giver

of the grains. Each pilgrim by his turn comes for his blessings and for narrating his own worries. The Bhopa listens to them and gives his remarks. Generally he utters *Parmatma sab thik karega* (God will do all well). Even then if the complainant is not satisfied, the Bhopa would say in a scolding manner '*Ja ! mu dekh lunga. Koi Tharo Bal bhi Vanko ni kar sake.* (Go ! I shall see. No body can twist your hair even). Then he will place the peacock-feather broom over his head and the person will bow down for his blessings.

During these consultations, the Bhopa may order for the beat of the drum again. With that he again violently beats himself with the iron chain, or else takes the iron club and sticks it into his stomach Besides providing remedies for all types of complaints, Gadariyaji specialises in the cure of bites of poisonous insects and reptiles. The Bhopa would place his mouth on the infected part and suck in the poison and then spit it out in the coconut-bowl. After which *Bhabhut* (ash) is applied there.

Other occasions to seek his favour and guidance may also briefly be described here.

(a) *Pati Mangna*. Whenever people are undecided in any case they ask for his advice Some leaves of Margosa tree (Neem) or petals of a flower are spread on the top of the image and a plate (thali) is kept at the feet of it. The Bheru is requested to give *Pati*. If he approves of the decision, then the *pati* falls in the *thali*.

(b) Name giving. In most castes names of the newborn children are kept on suggestion of Bheru.

(s) *Bolama* This is giving a vow to Bheru. When the vow is to be fulfilled some special ceremony is done. Important among *Bolamas* are *Jagran, Pat chadhana, Jadulia rakhna*, and *gor pahrana*. *Jagaran* is the ceremonial wake of the night at the deity's shrine followed by a feast. *Pat chandhana* is to offer some amount of money at the threshold of a deity. *Jadulia rakhna* is not cutting hair of a child for a certain number of years and after which the first hair-cut takes place at the deity's shrine. *Gor* is a copper wire twisted in a ring form to be worn by a person who has taken this vow.

The common pilgrims bring with them grains or ghee or coconut to offer and take with them *Bhabhut* as the *prasad*

Some of the totkas (magical rituals to ward-off evil spirits) suggested by Bheru may be listed below :

1. The deity may ask the complainant to place an earthen lamp at the cross-roads ;
2. Some ashes of the domestic hearth are also required to be

taken in the winnowing fan to be winnowed at the cross roads ;

3 In case of a pregnant woman, who lost all her previous progeny, it was once suggested that she should take bath from a lota and collect all the water in a parat (kneading plate). This water should be brought to the deity a month prior to the delivery. After the birth, one of the silver ornaments of the mother should be touched with the newborn child and be kept aside ;

4 It was also suggested to her, that if the child remains alive, he should not wear the clothes of the house for a specific period and be garbed with begged clothes ;

5 In one case a person avowed that he would not cut the hair of the child for 7 years, if he is endowed with one, and that he would offer Rs 101 00 on 'pat' :

6 Some diseased persons were asked to bow down in the direction of Avri Mata, while keeping himself below the margosa tree ,

7. For a sick child the normal prescription from Bheru is that the child should be bathed in hot water and his clothes be changed. The mother should, then, go alone to the well for bathing.

8. In one case, all the four corners of the Sari of a diseased child's mother were taken in one hand by the Hajuriya and were dipped into a bowl filled with water.

The manner of worship, the assumption of a trance-situation by Bhopa, the fact of mediumistic communication and prescription of totkas, thus, characterise the Bheru-cult in Mewar. Though some of the Bherus gain popularity for certain types of remedies, they nevertheless solve all the problems that are placed before them. For the villagers, their Bheru is an omniscient deity, for the outsiders, its specialised role is the major attraction. While taking the full vicinage into account, it is the specialised role that contributes to the standing of a particular variety of Bheru and not its generalised role.

III

Bheru worship is also found in a Malwa village reported by Mayer (1960) in which Bheru has two varieties–Kala (dark) and Gora (fair) and "each person owes allegiance to either fair or dark Bheru, but not to both." Though a different shrine of Goraji is found in the Mewar village, no such exclusive allegiance exists. Moreover, unlike the Mewar village, in the Mayer's village "Bheru is the deity of the lineage" and its worship is "inexpensive and requires no priest. The only occasion when more complicated arrangements are needed is when a vow to Bheru is fulfilled." (Mayer, 1960 : 189) One of

such vows may be that the "fathers will not shave their sons' hair until after the fifth year" (P. 190). People "worship at the shrine established by the members of the unilineal descent group" (P. 189) and "the kind of Bheru a man has is written in his genealogy. In addition, he has a territorial link with Bheru. " (P. 190). In the Malwa village of 912 people, distributed in 27 castes, only "thirteen descent groups have a Bheru within the village boundaries".

In the Mewar village, though every family has faith in the worship of Bheru, the latter does not "stand for the lineage." The worship of minor Bherus is not regular, but the major Bherus have invariably a priest. The rites are not so simple and are always associated with trance-speaking. The distinction between different Bherus is not only that of location (though it helps in identifying or designating them) but also of particular function and specialised role that each performs. Only one instance is reported where a Bheru is named after a head of the family. But it is told that this is a deified spirit and not an actual Bheru.

Regarding Bheru worship in Malwa, Mayer has also pointed out two other things : (i) "occasionally a particular Bheru may be *acknowledged as particularly efficacious and people of other castes* may worship there .." (P. 191), and ; (ii) "Bheru shrine has lost its efficacy as a centre for agnates of a locality (if it ever possessed it) and has not gained any compensating position as a centre of corporate worship in individual villages " (P. 192).

The recognition based on the acknowledgment of his particular efficacy is also found to be true of a Bheru in Mewar. But unlike Malwa, the shrine of Bheru is a 'centre of corporate worship' in a Mewar village. Thus the significant difference between the Bheru cult of these two villages is that at one place it is a lineage deity, whereas at other it is a deity of the village, and at times, of an inter village importance.

IV

Writing about Bhairava of the 'purely classical type', Hopkins has also made a reference to "the popular modern side of his character, having nothing to do with the Brahmanic god". (Hopkins, 1953 : 538). In his attempt to understand the link between the 'village-god Bhairon' and the Brahmanic 'Bhairava', Hopkins has quite unawaringly made reference to the processes of "Universalisation and Parochialisation." (Marriott, 1955). The first part of his statement where he talks about the different 'stages' through which "the Bhairon has passed", suggests a kind of upward movement i. e., Universali-

sation ; but the second part of the statement refers to a process by which the "chance—resemblance" has helped in transferring "the attributes of the great god" (priestly Bhairava) to the peasant Bhairon". This illustrates the process of "downward devolution" (Marriott, 1955 : 200) i e. Parochialisation. It is, however, difficult to apprehend by this description as to whether Bhairava is the universalised version of Bheru, or Bheru is the parochialised form of Bhairava. And that is precisely the question articulated here.

The cult of Bheru in Mewar has with it a combination of rituals and attributes—Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic. The case of a Brahman invoking Bheru by sanskritic rites and getting bequeasts from him suggests the classical link. To identify Bheru as a ' gana" of Shiv is another But besides these, there are many non-Brahmanic rituals and practices associated with it. The Bhopa (who is more of a 'Shaman' than a priest) is always a non-Brahman. About 'Ghas Bheru', an explanation of its tribal affiliation is found in Hutton's Book, wherein he traces the origin of this deity from the practice of Nagas of Assam who "transport megaliths on wooden sledges" (1951 : 247). Similarly, the Bheru of Mayer's village is linked with different lineages as their tutelary, which also demonstrates a tribal link. But then this Bheru is also called the 'son of Shiva' or a 'ferocious aspect of the god Shiva'—a fact which contributes to its affiliation to the universal Bhairava.

It is, however, clear that beginnings of Universalisation have been made since the deity is regionally important in Mewar, and in Malwa village too, "a particularly efficacious" Bheru is worshipped by people of other castes. But in the latter case, the precipitation of parochialisation is also amply evident (Mayer, 1960 : 192). Thus in the former case universalisation of the tribal and parochial traits of Bheru worship have been merged with some of the universal traits of 'priestly Bhairava', but its *parochially universalised* form and mode of worship are more significant than the 'universal' traits. In case of Malwa Bheru, with its gradual contraction of the range of influence, it has become difficult to say whether it is parochialised version of Bhairava or the familial (or lineal) Bheru has ceased to even parochially universalise itself and has instead begun to degenerate. Thus in these two neighbouring regions of Mewar and Malwa, the process of universalisation has followed different paths One could legitimately ask, is it possible, in such differing situations, to have at any time one universalised form of the deity for India as a whole, or for even Northern India ? Moreover, Bheru worship in these areas is not neotoric, and it is also quite clear from the current

village studies that it is not reported in Kishangarhi (Marriott 1955), Shamirpet (Dube, 1955). Mohana (Majumdar, 1958) et al. In the neighbouring region of Malwa viz., *Bundelkhand, the cult is conspicuous* by its absence. These facts demonstrate the parochial nature of the deity, and it remains to be established whether they are results of either of *the twin processes or are a blending of the two.* An example of such blending is available in the worship of *Ganga ka Bheru* in the Mewar village. "Ganga" comes in the sanskritic realm *and "Bheru" has a parochial bond. Allocation of a separate* Bheru to Ganga is a case of blending which is inexplicable through the processes of universalisation and parochialisation.

It appears that Bheru in Mewar has a multifacet character; various Bherus having diverse origins at different times and performing varied functions. Bheru, in fact, acts as a "Mana-power" *which has been deified. This apotheosis of the power confuses it with* the classical Bhairava with which it has ' nothing to do" (Hopkins). Worship of Bheru of Ganga means worshipping the 'mana' of the *river.* The deification of *Gadariyaji* was a case of recognition of 'mana' of that particular place. Attribution of any unidentifiable vermilion pasted stone as Bheru also points toward that inference. Thus *Bheru* and *Bhairava* are, for all intents, separate deities and only the name-semblance has contributed to the confusion of understanding them as correlated. The present cult of Bheru in Mewar could be understood as consequence of *parochial universalisation* and a *blending* of the universal traits with parochial ones.

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CAṚAK FESTIVAL IN A WEST BENGAL VILLAGE :

Gouranga Chattopadhyay

In the paper at first the Caṛak festival which was witnessed by the author in the village Birsingha in Midnapur District of West Bengal has been described briefly. Then follows a comparison of that with the Carak as held around Birsingha in a few other villages, as also, though very briefly, with the Caṛak as celebrated in some other parts of West Bengal and at one place in East Bengal (now East Pakistan). The paper ends with a short discussion on some of the ritualistic as well as social aspects of the festival.

Traditionally, this festival is held in Birsingha every year during the end of Caitra (i. e. the middle of April)—the last month of the Bengali year It has to start twelve days before the last day of that month (i. e. the 30th) and ends on the *Sankrānti* i e on the last day itself.

The festival is centered around a Shiva temple and the worshipping is done by a hired priest, though previously a Brahmin of the village used to do it, and in exchange of it he had the privilege of enjoying some amount of rent-free land given by the Maharaja of Burdwan, who was the zamindar. Later on, that family became extinct in the male line, and the sister's son of the last male representative was brought to Birsingha.* He married a local Brahmin girl and became the priest. He and his descendants became wealthy and introduced the system of hiring a priest. The present descendant of that family is a college educated young man who takes pride in his ignorance of the rites and rituals of this and other Hindu cults, and he has been accepted by the society as such, without any censure The prestige of modern education added to the power of wealth certainly modifies conservatism even in religious practices

During this festival some people temporarily become devotees ("bhokte" or "bhoktyā") of Shiva and they lose all caste distinctions during the period they remain so They wear a short *dhuti* and use a *gamcha* (towel of thin texture) as a body cover during the day. They also keep a towel for drying themselves after bath. They carry a piece of cane in their hands. They are not supposed to pare their nails, nor to have a hair-cut, nor shave during the festival. They also should not sit on bare ground, but at least place a small bundle of straw on the ground and use it as a seat. Their diet should

consist of only boiled rice, milk, clarified butter or ghee, jaggery and fruits. These must not be cooked by any one other than the devotee himself, or his mother or wife. The oven should be made of three chunks of clay brought for that purpose only, and the fuel should be *pat kathi Chorcorus olitonius*) or coconut palm leaves or the leaves of sugarcane In short, they have to observe all the rules that a Hindu observes after the death of his parents and before the funeral oblations (*sraddho*) They can eat only once ; but that is however at night, after the day's functions are over. One of the devotees is the chief and he is called the *Pat Bhokte.* He enjoys some amount of rent-free land Another devotee is called *Deul,* who has to perform everything at the end i e. after all the devotees have performed the rite. He also enjoys some amount of rent-free lands. These two posts are, of course, hereditary. This devotee who is called *Deul* here is termed as *Ses* elsewhere (Chattopadhyay, 1942). The rest of the devotees voluntarily join ranks for the year's festival As the *dhuti* and the *gamcha* have to be new ones, it entails some expense on the parts of the devotees. They also wear a bunch of threads (white) around their necks. This is called "utti", and as a matter of fact, only after this has been put around the neck of a man, either by priest or by a devotee, that he becomes a devotee

The priest, on the first day, incarnates life in an earthen pot called the *Kamini* or *Kaminya* (discussed later on), and decapitating a *magur* fish (*clarias batrachus*) offers it to her. He then worships Shiva who is represented in the temple, as usual, in the form of a *linga* placed inside a small tank made of masonry work known as *gambhir* He then worships *Sakti,* the consort of Shiva, who is represented in the form of another earthen pot kept permanently inside the temple. All these deities are worshipped by the devotees twice every day, once in the morning and once in the evening Every time he does so, he takes his position in such a way that the particular representative of the deity remains on his North.

The devotees are daily led by the priest to a particular pond, called *gajone pukur,* for bath just before sun set. They go there carrying a bamboo pole, termed *alam* or *nishan* (which means flag), to which is tied a triangular piece of red cloth. They are accompanied by the village drummers (Muci or cobbler by caste), who also enjoy some rent-free land for their function in this as well as in all other village festivals. As a matter of fact, wherever these devotees go, they carry with them this *alam* and the drummers go with them. However, at the pond the devotees have their bath and worship the setting sun. On their return to the temple, they also worship a stone

structure representing *Haragouri*. This is situated outside the temple, and to the north of it.

If a man becomes devotee for the first time in his life he has to go through an initiation ceremony called "dag", which literally means a mark. The village barber, with the help of several devotees prepare a charcoal fire in two earthen fire-pots (*"dhunuci"*) and presses these thrice on the new devotee's forehead and shoulders through *pippal* (*Ficus religeosa*) leaves smeared with ghee, which are first stuck to the spots to be touched, the ghee being used as an adhesive. The eyes of this devotee is first tied over with a *gamcha* before this operation which leaves burn mark or *dag* The barber gets a few pice from the initiated, as a sort of remuneration This marking occurs after the man has put on the sacred thread and taken a bath as discussed above.

Now the swinging over the fire or *Hindolā* takes place. There are two wooden uprights or *Hindolā gāch* or *Hindola Kāth* to which is tied a wooden horizontal bar at a height of some 10 or 12 feet from the ground. Two soft cloth loops are tied to this bar through which a devotee passes his legs, and with the help of others swings. Right below the bar there is a pit, where the barber lights a fire and fans it up so that the flames touch the face and the head of the devotee. Just before the swinging starts, the priest reads out a script written in Bengali (while all the other incantations are in Sanskrit), which praises the Maharaja of Burdwan in the first paragraph, and then goes on to say something which could not be deciphered by the author. After the end of each paragraph the priest pauses and the devotees pursing their lips let out a shout in unison ("Ooooo–"). According to them, the Maharaja of Burdwan had started the worship of Shiva in this area (meaning the District of Midnapur which fell under the jurisdiction of his zamindery) by introducting Carak, and though no one knows how this piece of literature fell into the hands of the hereditary priest's family, they believe it to be an attempt by some one to praise the Maharaja.

After this and before Hindolā it is customary for the local talents to challenge each other to duel through poetry. The challenger puts a question through poetry, which is answered by the poet challenged who must compose an extempore answer, the subject mostly being some incident from the Mahābhārata or Purānas. But now-a-days this custom is no more followed as there do not seem to be any such poets available. In the present case one or two persons sang out the questions, after being requested there was no one to by some villagers, and since there was no one to take up the challenge,

they themselves had to answer it.

The fire-swinging now started, led by the *Pât*, ending with the *Deul*, who had to swing with one leg only before getting down. At the end, the *Pât* has to pick up some of the glowing ember, from the fire in a *dhunuci* and deposit it inside the temple. After that the priest pours over the up turned palms of the devotees some water with which the deity Shiva had been earlier bathed ("Caranāmrita"). They drink this, go home, eat and retire for the night. On the eleventh day of the moon and on the day before *sankrânti* (*Mahā-mel*), they have to observe total fast, i.e they have to miss even this dinner. Throughout the function, the devotees from time to time shout out the name of Shiva and say that they do obeisance at his feet.

On the *mahâ-mel* (29th of Caitra) day the routine for them is different They have to visit all the houses in the village with the drummers and the priest and touch the roof of each house with the *âlām* and the canes and bless the householders. They, in their turn, give alms to the devotees. These include rice, money etc. After going around the village in this fashion they visit other villages too if they have any regular transactions there. For example, as there are no washermen or blacksmiths in Birsingha, the villagers patronise these two of a neighbouring village. The devotees go to this village too, but stop at the house of only these two village-servants. On their return they bathe and pour water over the Shiva-linga first, and then on the Haragouri. When they have finished doing it, the village women come and pour water on Shiva-linga. Those who can afford it offer milk and fruits to Shiva and light up a lamp inside the temple praying for the welfare of their children. The water that accumulates inside the tank is collected in a bell-metal vessel and is later on partaken by the devotees.

In the evening the priest prepares a number of short strings by twisting a type of grass blades called *durbâ* (*Cynodon dactylon*) together and dipping them in turmeric These are tied, one to the Shiva-linga and one to the "ghot" of *Ś*akti. The rest are kept to be used later on. This type of thread is usually tied to the wrists of the bride and her groom before marriage among the Bengali Hindus. Here, since the "mahā-mel" night is considered to be the night of Sihva's marriage to Durgā, these threads are used.

The devotees now take their bath at the *gâjone pukur.* The *Pât* carries on his head a strainer made of bamboo and wire (though traditionally, it should be made of bamboo only), a *dāo* or heavy chopper, and two articles known as "gamar gacher kanta." These

are small pieces of *gâmâr* wood to which small iron blades are fixed. These are washed during the bath and the party proceeds towards the compound of a man where stands the only *gâmâr* tree (*Gmelina arborea*, Linn.) of the village. Here the priest joins the party, worships the tree and ties one of the yellow threads to a handy slender branch, which the *Pât* chops off with one blow of the *dão*. The arrangements of the worships here is made by the barber, and some rice is offered to tree at his expense. This rice is later given away to the man to whom the tree belongs.

They next go to the temple where the priest ties a yellow thread to the wrist of the chief devotee, who reciprocates the action. Now both of them tie such threads to the wrists of the other devotees, the hereditary priest, the village headman and lastly to all those (men only) who are present there. This over, the devotees construct a kind of straw doll with a bamboo cross-piece and straw and fix it to the ground to the west of the temple. This would come into use later on.

After this the devotees visit the cremation ground and collect the remnants of charred wood which had been used for cremation. They bring back these to a place called the *carak dāngā*, which is situated at the north-eastern boundary of the village, and build a miniature funeral pyre with these pieces. Then they return to the temple. All this is done accompanied by dancing and shouting and mimicking horses and so on, on the part of the devotees. Now they again troop back to the temple and perform two types of dances. The one is known as *dhunuci cālā*. Two devotees pick up a lighted *dhunuci* each and dance to the rhythm of drums. Then follows a dance with canes. This is performed by many devotees together and is known as *bet cālā*. These over, the *Hindolā* is again performed. Next, the priest blesses (in Bengali) the Maharaja of Burdwan, the devotees, the villagers, himself and lastly the drummers This is termed as *aśirbādi*. Then the priest performs a special worship inside the temple. This is called the *mel pujo*. He uses all the ingredients used in a Hindu marriage and also draws a lotus like diagram with five colours—white from rice powder, yellow from turmeric, black from burnt husks of paddy, red from a mixture of vermillion and rice powder and bluish-green from pasted beans mixed with turmeric. After the worship is over he as usual distributes the "prasād", i e. part of food offered to the god. After that the devotees collect some thorn, scatter them in front of the temple, cover them with straw and roll over them. Then the priest prepares a pipe full of *gānjā* (Bhang or *Cannabis sativa*. and leaves it for Shiva.

to enjoy a smoke. This *mel-pujo* represents Shiva's marriage. Now the door is locked and some thorns are placed over the lock.

At about 3.00 A.M. or so the devotees get up, wash, bathe and set fire to the straw doll mentioned earlier. This is known as *Paścim Udav* or the rising of the sun in the West. Next the funeral pyre is set fire to This represents, according to them, Shiva's cremation. Then in the late morning (about 8 A.M.), the devotees bathe and proceed from the pond, one after the other, to the temple, and circuits it thrice before bowing to the deities, in a peculiar fashion A man lies down facing the ground, stretches out his hands and makes a mark where his finger tips touch the ground. Then he gets up, walks upto this mark, and again falls flat This is called *Pranām sevā Khāṭā.* When this is over, the door of the temple is opened and inspected, first by the village headman and next by the hereditary priest Previously the landlord (the Maharajah of Burdwan) used to appoint a representative who used to go in third. But now, after the priest, the devotees and a few of the visitors squeeze into the temple The priest now let looses either a pigeon with its wings tied up or a *māgṛur* fish inside the lotus shaped diagram mentioned earlier. Naturally the animal wriggles about, and from its movements old peasants forecast the nature of the coming harvest, rainfall etc.

At about 2–30 P.M. the devotees assemble at the *caṛak dāngā* after having their bath. By this time the village headman, with the help of the villagers, erect what is known as the *caṛak gāch* here. This is a long and stout wooden beam erected vertically on the ground This beam or pole is provided with a rotating head, which again has a long arm provided with ropes and hooks, at its free end. A devotee ties a *gāmchā* at his waist and another one across his chest and back. Then one book is passed through each of these belts from the behind. When he is thus secured to the arm of the pole, the whole thing is rotated by pulling a rope which is attached to the machine for this purpose, and the devotee goes round and round flying through air. All the devotees go through this hook-swinging Previously these hooks used to be passed through the back muscles of the devotees instead of passing them through the belts.

When the swinging is over, the devotees march back to the temple where they jump from the horizontal bar of the *Hindolā gach* on two sacks filled with straw. The two wooden pieces to which some small blades are fixed, mentioned earlier, are kept on the sacks where the devotees are expected to land. When the last devotee has

jumped, there is a mad scramble by the devotees for grabbing some straw from the sacks. It is believed that the ash of these straw acts as a good fertilizer for vegetables like water melons, pumpkins, and even potatos. With this the day's function ends.

Early next morning the devotees queue up in front of the temple and have their hair cut, nails pared and faces shaved by the barber. Then, after bath, the Pāṭ drops the *Kāmini ghoṭ* into a tank situated just behind the temple. This over, they hold a sort of picnic with the rice and articles collected from the villagers previously. This is called *Shiva jajna.* With this the festival is brought to an end.

An incident which occurred on this occasion in Birsingha should be mentioned here before passing on to the next section. The original "Pāt" had fallen ill on the second day of the festival. So he had nominated a cousin of his, who was also a devotee, to act as Pāt in his absence. He again took over the duties on the last day during *pranam seva khāṭā.*

Comparison :

In the neighbouring villages, I had the oportunity of visiting three other places where this same festival was going on. As the functions take place practically everywhere on the same day, I could see these in parts only The differences that are noteworthy are, first, the *Pranam Ṣeva Kh*ātā in the village Parulia, which lies to the West of Birsingha. This village is a *Bāgdi* village. The devotees wait till the sun of a hot April day shines mercilessly overhead and makes the earth below extremely uncomfortable to tread on. Only then do they start their journey from the pond to their temple, so that their penance has an extra element of self inflicted pain.

In the village Nokurbazar, which lies to the south of Birsingha, Caṛak is held with a greater festivity. That is because this is patronised by a wealthy one time landlord and an influential doctor (Homeopath), who, incidentally, has been elected to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on the Congress Party ticket A fair is held here. Also, some Bagdi youth, on the last day, have their tongues pierced by the local blacksmith and introducing through the perforation in the tongue an iron rod with a diameter of about 0·75″ and several yards in length, dance in front of the temple and move the rod from side to side through the tongue while blood flows freely. It is essential for at least one person to perforate his tongue and dance every year. For this purpose there is a hereditary post of chief performer known as *mul*. Other persons voluntarily join him. Most of these dancers drink country liquors heavily for the occasion. Only the *mul* is not allowed to touch liquor on this day.

In the neighbouring township of Kharar (or rather its colony Kishtopur), the swinging ceremony is traditionally held on the first day of Bengali year, instead of on the last day of the year. Here also a fair is held But what attracts people more than the fair is the hook swinging ceremony. Here the top of the "carak gāch" is provided with a cross-piece on the rotator, and each arm of the cross piece has a pulley attached to it. Four devotees are at a time pulled up with the help of the ropes passing through the pulley and swing from the ends of the four arms simultaneously

From Chattopadhyay's (Chattopadhyay, 1935) descriptions we find that my observations here somewhat differ from what he gathered in Tarakeswar as also from the suburbs of Calcutta. The first difference is that Chattopadhyay found a temporary thatched hut for housing the deities during carak. He also notes the presence of an earthen figure of a crocodile, which is worshipped, with a clay child lying in between its jaws. Then, during the ceremony, I did not find any piercing of sides with arrows in Birsingha. Among the other major differences, there is no "burning the house" in Birsingha, nor is there any propitiation of the resuscitated ghosts. On the other hand, there is no "paścim uday" performed in the suburbs of Calcutta. It was gathered from the informants that previously in Birsingha too, the devotees used to swing after piercing their back muscles and attaching the hooks there. But this was dropped as the villagers considered it barbaric. Some said that the custom was dropped because the Government had declared the custom as illegal.

The terms "*alam*" and *manu* are found in the Dharma worship (Sunya Puran) The cutting of the *gamar* branch and the fitting of two pieces of *gamar* wood with steel nails is also described there. The worship of the *kaminya* and the procedure of the Hindola is also noted in the Sunya Puran.

In Faridpur District of East Bengal, now East Pakistan, the festival is celebrated in a more different way, from what we have noted for West Bengal. No one becomes a devotee there. A man belonging to the *Kayastha* caste and another person belonging to the *Namasudra* caste enjoy some rent-free land and it is their duty to help the priest during Carak.

A wooden plank is kept in the temple throughout the year. This is known as *Pāt Gosain*. During Carak he is bathed and taken out to all the houses in the village, where he is given rice, vegetables etc. This closely resembles the "Dharma" worship (Chattopadhyay, 1942 ; Bhattacharya, 1952).

On the day before *śankrānti* a group of Namasudras perform a

dance known as *Bounācant* where one man dresses up like Shiva and another as his companion Nandi, and the rest dress up like girls. Also, one man takes the make-up of a langur and yet another turns up dressed as a tiger, both of whom are 'killed' by a man posing as a hunter. A clay figure of Haragouri (i. e half the image is that of a man while the other half is that of a woman) and the wooden *Pāt Gosāin* are worshipped by the priest. Neither the swinging over fire nor the hook-swinging ceremony is done, though the latter used to be done about a century ago [1]

A fire-walking ceremony ("Vilavilairevo" or "the jumping into oven") has been reported from Fiji by (Roth, 1933). But this does not seem to have any connection with the Caṛak festival.

Discussion :

In all it seems that Carak, like most festivals, is more a magical ceremony than a religious one There is, of course, the religious devotion present all through. But at every step, the presence of magical ideas is found. To begin with, the forecasting of the crop-growth from the wriggling movements of a fish or bird is certainly connected with magic. The belief that the burnt ash of straw used for jumping on is a good fertiliser seems to suggest the carrying over of an old tradition of burnt vegetation fertilising fields. As it is never put in paddy fields, the belief cannot be associated with rice cultivation. This again suggests that it is older.

There are many examples of propitiating primitive deities with human blood for the growth of crops among tribal folks in India and elsewhere. The institution known as Meriah of the Khonds is one of the classical examples If in the present case we look at this trait from that angle, an explanation might be found. It is known that the jumping on thorn, if seriously performed, is bound to bring out blood from the body of the devotee, and it might be expected that some amount of blood would soak into the straw inside the jute sack. Though now the devotees say that the Lord Shiva saves them from any injury, it seems that this is a recent innovation, since Shiva and his followers are known to be satisfied with blood offerings, as is found both in the traditional origin of Caṛak as well as in the present practice of piercing the tongue with rods and the sides with arrows, whence blood flows freely. So, it may be suggested that previously it was this blood soaked straw that was burnt and put in crop fields as fertilisers. So the belief is in human blood promoting crop growth as this is associated with the ashes. This suggests a connection of the practice with slash and burn type of cultivation on such fields.

But in the area where this festival has been studied millet is not grown Also paddy cultivation is not believed to be helped thereby. Hence crop growth can only refer to "other crops". In the area studied these are vegetables which are cash-crops. The potato (solanum) is known to be a recent innovation in cultivation in this area (it was introduced only a few generations ago) and is a valuable cash-crop. So, along with other vegetables, potato has also been mentioned by the informants There is no question thereby involved of offering patato to the deities at Carak or connected festivals. It remains taboo for this as in rituals elsewhere.

It may be mentioned in this connection that in Ceylon a Hook-swinging ceremony (Hocart, 1927) is held, which might have some connection with propitiation of the deity with human blood offerings. This ceremony is known as *Tukkam*. It is not mentioned when it is held. A man goes under devout service in a Bhagavati temple for a period of 7, 12, 21 or 41 days On the last day his back muscles are pierced with hook attached to a crane-like contraption. He wears a ceremonial dress and carries sword and shield. A hen is killed and its blood is allowed to drop on his feet. Now by manipulating the device he is lifted up into air and the machine is dragged around the temple thrice. Here a hen is killed and its blood is allowed to drop on the feet of the devotee who swings from a hook. Hocart writes that among the other beliefs connected with this ceremony, one which according to him should be given serious considerations, is that it is a mild form of the old cruel rite of human sacrifice, and in support thereof he points out (by the performers themselves) the practice of killing a hen at feet of the victim.

If we now follow the festival from first to last, several apparently disconnected traits or facts emerge. These are : (a) the "*kāmini ghot*" (b) the *Paścim Uday*, and (c) the "*Shiva Yajna*". We would consider the *Paścim Uday* first.

Shiva is married and immediately after that he dies and his cremation is effected Then, a straw figure is burnt and this is termed *Paścim Uday.* This term and the ceremony of *Paścim Uday* occur in the myth and rituals of Dharma worship (Ghanaram's Dharma Mangal). At the consummetion of Dharma worship Lausen, as noted, had achieved the feat of making the sun rise in the West. This is termed as *Paścim Uday.* For the sun which sets in the West, it is "resurrection." Again, if we look up the cases studied by Chattopadhyay in and around Calcutta, it is seen that a *śol* (*Ophi cephalus stratus*) fish is burnt and later on it is supposed to be resuscitated. Also, a temporary hut is set on fire from which the chief

devotee runs out in a trance. It looks like as if he was going through fire and coming out reborn. These facts suggest that in Caṛak originally the belief was that Shiva or some earlier entity replaced by him really died and then his resurrection occurred. This *Paścim Uday* really should represent the resuscitation and come after cremation, but due to some chronological topsy turvydom it has come to be performed before the burning of Shiva's pyre. But as in Hindu philosophy Shiva is immortal, in the festival around Calcutta, where high caste influence and orthodox ideas are better felt, Shiva has been replaced by a *"śol" fish*. Such replacements are not uncommon. Chattopadhyay has pointed out how a goat seems to have replaced a human victim in *Graha Barana*. In South India, Madras, in the hook-swinging ceremony corresponding to Caṛak of Bengal, "a high caste man would make a vow, and he could send a paid substitute. After the Govt. had banned the use of hooks, alive goats were substituted instead of men." That a substitute is as good as the original is seen in the present case too, where after the *Pāt* fell ill, he nominated a devotee to take his place in his absence. Then again, in Hindu mythology we find that when Harish Chandra's son declined to be sacrificed, a substitute was purchased for the purpose. In modern times the *Meriah* man has been replaced by an animal. Other examples have also been noted by Chattopadhyay. Now that we have arrived at the point where we have ventured to suggest that on the one hand the use of burnt straw fertiliser is connected with some kind of human blood offering, and the last part as the death and resurrection of Shiva, we might further venture forth and say that since Shiva is an immortal deity, here also some human sacrifice was made (the dacapitation of the *"māgur"* fish should be noted) and later on he was supposed to be brought back to life.

So far as an explanation for the term *Paścim Uday* is concerned it is known that Caṛak is very much connected with the sun as the last day of Caitra is known as *"Mahā Viśuba Śankranti"* (i e. Vernal Equinox) and that the sun deity is connected with Dharmathakur in many ways. As such, the diffusion of a term is only natural.

The use of the name of the deity Shiva in connection with the death and resurrection in Birsingha as well as the use of the term *Paścim Uday* are two examples of the process which Redfield terms (Redfield–1954) "Universalisation', meaning identifying an element of the little local tradition with an element of the Great tradition. There can be however, a second explanation for these two phenomena, namely, *Pascim Uday* and the burning of the pyre. In Satapatha Bramhana (S.B.E.) it is stated that the other Devas had

gone to heaven ignoring the Lord of the Cattle or Pasupati, which is another name for Shiva, who thereupon rose in anger and raised his weapon in the North. On this the other gods asked him to desist and offered him a share in the Yajna offerings i.e. admitted him to the rites as a Deva like them.

This makes it clear that Pasupati or Shiva was not originally a member of the Vedic pantheon, but later, as a result of the military prowess of his followers he was included in it. His followers also naturally came into the orthodox fold. This would mean that the old Pre Rig Vedic tribal god died and was reborn as a regular member of the orthodox pantheon.

It is suggested here that the idea of death and resuscitation found in Carak festival may be a carrying over of that ancient tradition, in ritualized form.

So far as the term "*Shiva Yajna*" is concerned, it seems to be just a case of giving a big name to a little of relaxing after the painstaking days of the festival.

Now comes the question of the "*kāmini Ghot*". Bhattacharya (Bhattacharya, 1346 Bengali year) writes that wherever Dharma slabs (i. e. stone slabs representing the deity Dharma) are found, one or two slabs lying near it are termed as *Kaminya* (or "Kāmini"), and that these represent *Sebā Dāsi*, which means literally something like "hand maid" or female servitors. Now, a female servitor cannot be equated to a wife. But that is exactly what the people of Birsingha do. They consider *Kāmini* to be another name for Durgā, the consort of Shiva. I do not know how this idea of the association of *Kamini* with Dharmathakur came in Dharma worship, but it seems that in the present case this is an instance of the process termed as "Parochialization" by Marriott (Marriott, 1955), which means the borrowing of an element from the Great Tradition by the Little Tradition and then giving it a local shape, altogether different from what it originally had been. Now, in the Carak festivals that are held in the suburbs of Calcutta or in Tarakeswar, no *ghot* is worshipped other than the deities Shiva a Durga. No "*Kamini Ghot*" is worshipped in the Carak festival held in the Birbhum District of Bengal as well[2]. So if we now accept this as a local element of Birsingha in the light of what data we possess, it may be said that the local people have borrowed the term *Kaminya* or *Kamini* from the Great Tradition of Dharma worship and then given it a local shape in the Carak festival.

Now, let us consider how so many traits from Dharam worship have come into Carak. Chattopadhyay (1942) as well as M. Shastri (1894) indicated how a transition from Dharma to Shiva has been

taking place. Again, Bhattacharya (1346 Bengali Year) and others have suggested how many traits of Dharma worship have diffused into Carak. We have earlier pointed out how Carak festival is really connected with the Vernal Equinox of the sun. It is further known that the swinging in the circular fashion from the Carak pole is really an imitation of the solar rotation. Also during the Carak it is found that every evening the sun is worshipped at the time of the ceremonial bath in the evening.

Dalton, S. C. Roy, Das and others have pointed the existence of sun worship among the tribes of Central India and that it is not a recent borrowing. Many of the features of such sun worship are present in the worship of Dharma, both among the Hindus as well as among those tribes of North East and Middle So, if Dharma worship of present day is a variant of an ancient sun worship, there will not be much opposition to elements of the present day Dharma worship, which are not incongrous with the ritual of Carak festival, diffusing into it, since it is also connected with the sun worship.

Lastly, one more thing of great importance remains to be discussed, which I shall mention here very briefly. Like in all other parts of India, the caste structure is still in function to quite an extent in this village, as well in other villages in Bengal. In Birsingha, there are in all five main caste groups. These are Brahmin, Sadgope, Nāpit, Bāgdi and Muci. Intercaste marriage is out of the question. The Brahmins may accept cooked food from none of these, but accept water from the Sadgopes and Nāpits only. The Muci should not be even touched by a Brahmin. As a matter of fact the Muci impure for all other castes. Generally a Sadgope avoids accepting water from the Bagdi, and even if they do accept, they try to keep it a secret. But during Carak, when a man becomes a devotee, he must not observe any caste difference with the other devotees, whatever castes they may belong to. The only difference in the case of a Brahmin is that since he wears his holy thread around his neck, he has to wear his "utti" around his wrist.

But the lowest caste, the Muci, however, never become devotees. That is not only because the other devotees would object to it, but because, no ordinary priest would perform the rite of making them devotee (i. e giving the "utti"). Because the Brahmin who acts as the priest of a Muci looses his caste. They claim that there is a special subcaste of Brahmins who act as their priest and the members of it are debarred from having social intercourse with other Brahmins. Since the Muci are very poor, they cannot afford to engage their own priest during this festival, and as a result, they

can be found as drummers and not as devotees The above is the version of the Mucis themselves. But the informants from the clean castes said that though both the Bagdis and the Mucis are unclean, yet a Bagdi is allowed to enter the temple since he is not a beef eater like a Muci, who, however much he claims that he may become a devotee by engaging his own priest, will never be allowed to cross the threshold of the temple.

The orthodox Brahmins of the village do not participate in this festival. As they are very few in number, they have no way of stopping it, although they openly declare that since this festival has a non-Vedic origin, it should not be attended by the upper castes. But the festival in gaining popularity every year (previously the number of devotees used to be very few and used to come only from the Bagdi caste). The enthusiasm with which the whole village participates in it these days inspite of the opposition from the orthodox Brahmins, is one of signs of the gradual decadence of the power of the high-caste Brahmins.

NOTES

1. This data was collected from Sri T. C. Ray Choudhury, Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Calcutta. The festival is celebrated every year in his house—his family being the present representative of the old landlords of the village The name of the village is Amgram. It is situated in the Madaripur Subdivision of Faridpur District, East Pakistan.

2. This information was supplied to me by Dr. A. R.Banerji, (Research Fellow in Anthropology), who himself hails from the Birbhum District of West Bengal.

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THE HIERARCHY OF DEITIES IN AN ANDHRA VILLAGE

T. R. Singh

In a rigidly structured caste-society, the concept of hierarchy remains uppermost in the minds of people. In their ideological system even the pantheon is viewed from this point of view. The present paper attempts to analyse the functions of various deities in the village pantheon, and to classify them in a hierarchical order. The village chosen for study is Madhawaram having a population of about 500 people and situated at a distance of 18 miles from Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, India.

This village has seventeen Hindu castes and four caste-like but not wholly assimilated semi-tribal groups. The attributional theories of caste-ranking as well as the interactional patterns rooted in the concepts of purity and pollution, provide a basis for the ranking of these castes. They may be broadly classified thus :

First level
(Twice-born castes)

	BRAHMANS (priest)	
KOMATI (trader)	LINGĀYAT (a Saiva religious sect)	RAJPUT (non-Telugu warrior caste)

Second Level
(castes of agriculturists & artisans and higher service castes)

	KUMMARI (potter)
	GOLLA (shepherd)
	TENUGU MUTTARASI (agriculturists)
	KURMA (blanket-maker),
CAONDLA (toddy-tapper)	SALE (weaver)
	CHIPPA (tailor),

Third Level
(Lower service castes)

SAKALI (washerman) MANGALI (barber)

Fourth Level
(untouchable castes)
MALA
(agricultural labourers)
BEGARI
(grave-digger)
MADIGA
(leather-worker)

Besides these castes, the semi-tribal groups of Dasari (dramatist), Pichkuntla (begger), Erkala (swineherd) and Vadde (worker in stone) who enjoy more or less equal status can be placed above the untouchables (fourth level above) and below the lower service castes (third level above). The artisan castes belonging to the Panch Brahma group, i.e., Vadla (carpenter) and Kammari (black-smith) claim a status equal to that of the Brahmans. However, in general estimate of the other sections of the village community they would be ranked fairly low in level 2 described above.

The village is surrounded by hillocks on all sides. A tendency towards caste-concentration in well-marked areas is apparent. The geographical distribution of deities and shrines suggests that the social contours have largely coincided with the ritual ones. The shrines of caste deities are in the vicinity of the quarters inhabited by that caste. There are certain common village deities. Gamini or Yaksha, guardian deity of the village settlement, has two shrines. Both of these are located in the south , one at a point where the village boundary starts and another at the actual entrance to the village. On the embankments of the two village tanks and on the field-embankments are the shrines of Maisamma. Ellamma has its abodes in the mango and toddy groves and also in the houses of many individuals belonging to castes of Levels 2, 3 and 4 Hanuman's temples are located on the northern and southern fringes of the village. The eastern fringe has the shrines of Durgamma, Poshamma, and Ningammayya. Kotamma resides on the northern side. Mallanna and Bhairav have their shrines on the western side of the village. The shrine of the village deity called Bodrai is in the centre of the village. Gods and deities like Narayanmurti, Ganesh, Laxmi and Saraswati do not have separate temples but their pictures are found in many houses.

Similar to the hierarchy of castes built on the basis of certain attributional and interactional theories, a hierarchy of the deities of the village can be attempted on the basis of the following criteria :—

I. Attributes, powers, and virtues of a deity ;
II. Food offerings acceptable to a deity ;
III. Fasts in honour of a deity ;
IV. Trance and dance in honour of a deity ;
V. Types of priest worshipping a deity ,
VI. The 'spread' of the worship of a deity.

I. Attributes, powers, and virtues of a deity

Following Harper (1959), according to their attributes deities could be classified as :

(i) All good, (ii) Good and bad (iii) All bad. A fourth category of deities who are neutral, i. e. who are neither good nor bad could also be added.

In the category of deities who have *all good* attributes the following can be listed : (1) Narayanmurti, (2) Hanuman, (3) Saraswati, (4) Ganesh, (5) Lakshmi.

They are worshipped for their special powers. Narayanmurti is believed to be capable of granting salvation (mukti). Hanuman and Saraswati genarate devotion (bhakti) which ultimately paves the way for salvation. These two alongwith Ganesh are also believed to possess the power of bestowing learning or knowledge (vidya). The gift of wealth (sampatti) is under the control of Lakshmi.

In the category of those who are both *good and bad* the following can be included : (1) Durgamma who sends prosperity but can, when annoyed, also cause epidemics. (2) Ellamma who causes skin diseases when infuriated, and when pleased ensures better crops, wealth and health. (3) Poshamma is the deity of small-pox. When she is angered small-pox is caused. Periodic worship is supposed to keep her pleased , in which case she protects her devotees.

The *all bad* deities are represented in the village by—

(1) Balamma—notorious for causing death of children]
(2) Pinnamma—known for causing disease to children
(3) Narasimmasami—known for causing illness to people.

All these are worshipped because they are feared for their power of evil They have nothing good to offer, but their displeasure can he harmful and even fatal.

The *neutral* deities do not have any intrinsic powers of doing good or causing harm, and are worshipped only for their divine

character. This category includes—

(1) Bodrai—the goddess of village territory
(2) Mallanna—deity of the shepherds
(3) Ningamayya—brother of Durgamma and Ellamma
(4) Gamini or Yaksha—the deity keeping a watch over the village.

It is hardly necessary to point out that in the rank order in the hierarchy the *all good* deities came first, both *good and bad* are placed next, and the *all bad* are the last and lowest. The status of the neutrals is not clearly defined.

II. Food offerings acceptable to a deity

(a) Vegetarian only (*e. g.* Narayanmurti, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh and Ellamma).
(b) Partly vegetarian and partly non-vegetarian (*e. g.* Durgamma, Bodrai, Narasimmasami).
(c) Non vegetarian only—

(i) Those accepting only fowls, sheep and goats (*e. g.* Poshamma, Balamma, Pinnamma, Peddalu, Kotamma, Mallanna, Chaudamma)

(ii) Those accepting fowl, sheep, goat and also buffalo (Durgamma and Maisamma).

Vegetarian deities have a higher status. The status goes down along the scale for the ranking of foods. Among the non-vegetarian deities those who accept only fowl, goat or sheep are superior to those who also accept buffalo.

III. Fasts in honour of a deity

(a) Deities for whose worship fasts are compulsory (*e. g.* Narayanmurti, Hanuman)

(b) Deities for whose worship fasts are optional (*e.g.* Saraswati, Ganesh, Lakshmi, Durgamma, Ellamma, Peddalu, Narasimmasami).

(c) Deities for whose worship fasts are not at all necessary (the rest of the deities).

Roughly it could be said that the more demanding a deity is in respect of fasting, the higher its status. Fasts are compulsory for the highest among them ; and are not thought necessary for the lesser gods.

IV. Trance and dance in honour of a deity

Higher forms of worship associated with high-status deities do not require these. Trance and dance are associated with the deities of low-status ; mostly those possessing powers of evil and capable of causing harm.

V. Types of priest worshipping a deity

(a) Those requiring a Brahman priest (*e. g.* Narayanmurti, Hanuman, Lakshmi, Ganesh)

(b) Those requiring a Muttarasi priest (*e. g.* Poshamma, Bodrai, Ningamayya).

(c) Those requiring a Kummari priest (*e. g.* Maisamma, Durgamma)

(d) Those requiring a Vogodu priest (*e.g.* Mallanna).

(e) Those requiring a Baindla, or Potraj, or Pambala, or Erpula priest (*e. g.* Ellamma, Maisamma, Durgamma, Yaksha.)

The hierarchical ranking of the deities here clearly follows the traditional ritual ranking of priest's caste.

VI. The 'spread' of the worship of a deity

(a) All-India deities in their sanskritic form or regional adaptation (*e.g.* Narayanmurti, Hanuman, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Ganesh, Durgamma etc.)

(b) Regional deities (*e g.* Ellamma, Maisamma, Bodrai, Ningamayya, Poshamma, Balamma, Pinnamma, Peddalu, Galiamma, Yaksha etc.)

(c) Local deities (*e.g,* Mallanna, Chaudamma, Kotamma etc)

While deities in each class have their individual significance, their status depends largely on the territorial spread of their worship. All-India deities naturally are ranked the highest ; regional deities have an intermediate status ; and the local deities come last.

The intention of the writer in this paper is only to indicate the ample possibilities of research in the sphere of the ritual scheme of village life. It is suggested that on the basis of these and other relevant criteria, an attempt should be made to rank the village deities. The effort will be self-rewarding, in as much as it will illustrate certain basic value-attitude systems, will provide certain specific indices for the measurement of the degree and intensity of *sanskritization*, and will help to indicate clearly the classical (or all-India), regional, and local elements in a given culture viewed as a ritual system. This effort of the writer should be evaluated only as a preliminary step toward attempting to conceptualize a hierarchical scheme of deities in the village pantheon, leading to formulations of a wider and more meaningful theoretical significance.

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THE CHANGING RELIGION OF THE BHANGIS OF DELHI A CASE OF SANSKRITISATION

Ram Ratan

The present paper deals primarily with the various types of sects that are found among the Bhangis of Delhi. The Bhangis are found throughout India and are called indifferently Bhangi, Lāl Bêgi, Khākrob, Mêhtar, Churhā, Halālkhor, Bālmiki etc. in different parts and are considered to be untouchable caste in the Hindu hierarchy. The present study comprises a population of 16,696, Bhangis living in 92 colonies of Delhi City. The author carried on functional study of this community for more than three years, and the present paper is a part of his larger work on the Bhangi Community of Delhi. The description of the Bhangi religion presented here throws adequate light on some of the much-talked concepts of Sanskritisation, Brahimanisation or Hinduisation in Indian Sociology. (Srinivas : 1956)

The basis of the religion of the Bhangis is characteristically animistic. A host of deified 'ghosts or spirits' and '*Mātās*' (goddesse), *Lāl Beg* and *Banwarias* are venerated and worshipped. Besides these, *Bālmiki* is the most favoured god of the Bhangis. Many legends and rites of worship centre round the person of *Bālmiki*[1] whose images have been installed in the temples known as 'Bālmiki temples' which are situated in the colonies of Nabi Karim, Karol Bāgh and Panchkunyān Road. These temples have been built and maintained out of the subscriptions raised from Bhangis. The priests keep them clean and light lamps every day.

In the morning and evening the devotees after washing their hands and feet enter the temples, bow their heads to the images, chant beautiful hymns, offer flowers and pour some water. Some of them sit there meditating for a long time. Those who do not go to the Balmiki temples to offer worship they substitute it by putting two bricks on a plastered space which thereafter represents 'Balmiki'.

There are some Bhangis who have a strong belief in God who is considered to be omnipresent, omnicient and omnipotent. According to them God does not bother about Castes and Creeds and whoever worships Him sincerely becomes His. This is what is exactly expressed in a Bhangi proverb—'Jat pat na puche koi, Har ka Bhaja so Har kā Hoi'. Moreover the Bhangis follow numerous other religious sects, i e. 'Gorakh Panth', 'Ramanandi Panth', 'Kabir

Panth', and 'Dāttātreya Panth', etc.

As a matter of fact and belief not only they call themselves Hindus but the whole Hindu world recognize them as part of their society. Hinduism consists of various elements and though it is hard to define it precisely yet it will not be out of place to quote Sir Edward Gate here, "The Hindu religion is a complex congeries of creeds and doctrines. It shelters within its portals monotheists, polytheists, and pantheists; worshippers of the great gods Shiva and Vishnu, or of their female counterparts, as well as worshippers of the divine mothers, of the spirits of trees, rocks, and streams, and of the tutelary village deities, persons who propitiate their deity by all manner of bloody sacrifices, and persons who will not only kill no living creature, but who must not even use the word "Cut"; those whose ritual consists mainly of prayers and hymns, and those who indulge in unspeakable orgies in the name of religion" (Census Report 1911 . 114). Even this description is not considered complete, as E. A. H. Blunt says, "This description, full as it is, is still incomplete. To the list must be added worshippers of natural forces, of demons and ghosts, of ancestors, of saints and heroes. The Hindu has the choice of pantheism and animism, of polytheism and monotheism, of demonolatry and hagiolatry, of ancestor worship and animal worship, of metaphysics and magic—of every 'ism' and 'olatry' and worship known to man. Throughout the wide range of literature on the subject, there is not a single satisfactory definition of Hinduism[2] which is not surprising, since it is impossible to define the indefinite. Indeed, Hinduism is not so much a single religion, as a congeries of many, and very different, religions". (Blunt ; 1931 : 273)

Though Hinduism covers such a wide range consisting of various creeds and doctrines, yet today we find that 'the worship of Vishnu, Shiva, the female energies and Animism in their myriad forms now make up the faith of the vast bulk of the Hindu population. (Crooke : 253). The Bhangis also while believing in and worshipping a host of deified 'ghosts or spirits' and 'Mātās' (goddesses), 'Lal Beg', 'Banwarias', 'Shiva' and 'Vishnu' follow the same religion as is followed by the majority of the Hindus.

The Bhangis also follow different religious sects like 'Gorakh Panth', 'Kabir Panth', 'Dattatreya Panth' and 'Nānāk Panth' etc. With the advent of the Muslim rule in India, the Hindu world came under the foreign influence for the first time and reformists like Kabir and Ramanand, did a great work in the field of religion in

bringing out many reforms and as a result of which these sects came into being.

The reformation in Hindu religion in the times of the Muslims may very well be compared with the religious reformation almost simultaneously taking place in the Western World. To quote W. Crooke here, "It may fairly be compared with the great religious reformation which took place almost simultaneously in the Western World. But the analogy is far from complete. The Indian religious reformers were in no sense militant theologians like Luther; they were neither enthusiasts nor fanatics; but as a rule quiet devotees, with no mission to overturn existing religious institutions, no desire to free the Church from earlier age. They studiously avoided all idea of resisting the established political government; their followers were merely pupils, and not bound to gether by any rigid organisation. When the saint died he seldom left a successor to carry on his work. (Crooke, 1897 255–256)

These sects followed the guidance of their preceptors from whom they take their name; democratic influence is quite visible from the fact that many of the preceptors were drawn from inferior castes as Kabir from Weaver and Raedas from Chāmar castes. These preceptors emphasised equality amongst all castes and communities, and that is why the Bhangis followed their sects more keenly as compared to the people of other higher castes. A detailed account of these sects is given below :—

1. 'GORAKH PANTH'

The founder of this sect was Gorakhnath,[3] disciple of 'Guru' Machhender Nath. The monks and preceptors of this sect wear coloured rings (mudra) of glass in their ears and remain naked. They control spirits and use them in black as well as in white magic. They preach worship of 'Shiva' and 'Parvati' before a heap of fire (dhuni) and are fond of Bhāng and opium etc. But their main claim is that they lead a life of austerity and purity as it was explained by Nānak, the present preceptor of the sect : "*Tapasyā hamarā Kām hai braham-charya hamārā dharam hai*', i. e. Our aim is to lead a life of austerity and our religious duty, 'dharma', is to maintain our celibacy (Brahamcharya)".

In worshipping 'Shiva', his image is placed near a fire (dhuni). The preceptor sits there calmly in the meditating posture for a short time, and then utters loudly : "*Mahadeo ki Jai, Adi Nāth ki Jai, Uday Nāth, Machhander Nāth, Gorakh Nāth, Surat Nāth, Ogan Nāth, Mast Nāth ki Jai.* It means victory to "Mahadeo, Adi Nāth, Uday

Nāth, Machhender Nāth, Gorakh Nāth, Surat Nāth, Ogan Nāth, Mast Nāth". Thus he wishes victory to all the former head preceptors of the sect. He ends his utterances with the words "Shiva", and begins smoking either tabacco or '*Dhatoorā*' or '*Charas*' or '*Bhang*' etc. His followers, following him in his utteranaces; smoke with him one by one.

The preceptor's departure from Bhangi colony is marked with a special ceremony called "Rot". The proper time for observing it, is 12 A. M If this time does not suit the observers, any suitable time is fixed. At Mall Road Bhangi colony, the ceremony was observed at 5 P. M in 1952 when preceptor Nānak left that place.

A big 'rot' or a type of bread is cooked Near the fire, (dhuni), an earthen lamp fed with ghee, (jot) is lit. The fire (dhuni) is lighted and when flames begin to rise the preceptor throws a bit of bread (rot) in the fire with the chanting of incantations and loud utterances of *Shiv Gorakh Dutt*.

After this, women come to him one by one and whoever comes touches the preceptor's feet, and bows her head as a mark of reverance. The preceptor waves his hand over the fire and puts it on the woman's head, uttering the names of all preceptors of his sect and prays to 'Gorakh Nath.'[4] "Oh Gorakh Nath, this lady has come to you for shelter, that you grant her. Evil spirits trouble her, arrest them and cure her".

Then he gives ash from the fire to lick and to apply some on her forehead and on the middle portion of her breast. Similar process is followed with men and children. The Bhangis believe that the ash has supernatural powers to prevent evil influence and brings good luck to them. Now he counts the money received as presents from his followers and asks all present to light earthen lamps in their houses in the name of 'Gorakh Nath,' and present a bit of food prepared in the house. Further, he assures them that if they chant daily the name of 'Gorakh Nath', they would be immune from all diseases. Throughout, he continues the smoking of opium.

The monks and preceptors of this sect like all Hindu 'Sadhus' are buried in sitting posture. But the common followers of the sect burn their dead.

As time passed on many disciples of Gorakh Nath started their own sects in their names. Though these sects bear different names, yet they believe in, and follow basically the principles of Gorakh sect as described above. Such different sub-sects are : Mi Panth, Naga Panth, Kal Bhairav, Bharatrihari Panth, Gopichand Panth, Tola Panth etc.

(a) 'Mi Panth'

Monk 'Maya' founded this sect. A remarkable feature of the monks "Sadhus" of this sect is that like women, they wear bangles, use lipstick and apply henna on their palms and feet and antimony in their eyes. They keep long hair and wear silken clothes and have a "Trishul"[5] in their hands.

In "Sat Sangs" which are held at night and continue upto late hours women come with full make up. After the "Sat Sang" is over, some of the beautiful women are asked to stay and cohabit with the monks. Such selected women consider themselves to be very fortunate as they believe that by doing so supernatural traits would pass on to them. But these days this custom is fast disappearing due to the increased awakening.

(b) 'Naga Panth'

The followers of this sect believe that in the 'Kal yog[6]', preceptor 'Gorakh Nath' came on this earth in the incarnation of preceptor Sian Musht Nath, the founder of the Naga sect. It was Sian Musht Nath who started the fair at Bohar, a village near Rohtak district in East Punjab State.

According to the legend prevalent among the followers, Sian Musht Nath lived naked When he was 10 years old, one day he went to a big gathering of the Gorakh Sect's monks and he did not bow before them. So the monks became angry and asked him to explain the reason of not bowing before them. Sian Sahib said, "I want to bow but before whom ? I do not find any suitable monk for that". The monks in anger wanted to kill him but when they came near him, he struck both his palms on the earth and there was fire every where. The reality of Sian Sahib was now before the monks who touched his feet and begged forgiveness. He then caused rains, and there was no fire. A general feast was given to Sian Sahib.

Two important events of the Sian Musht Nath's life were related to me by Sunder Dass, a sweeper of Rajpura colony. Once Siān Baba came to Delhi and sat in meditation before a big fire in Chāndni Chowk market. The then king Shāhjāhan presented him with pearls tied in a very fine piece of cloth. Sian Baba threw it in the fire and after a short time picked out lakhs of such bundles from the fire. The King was greatly surprised.

Sian Musht Nath had two disciples, Rampat and Dhata, who were detained by the inmates of a village named Kharak. He asked the inmates of the village many a times to free his disciples but in vain. At last he, through his magic power, created snakes in such a

large number in that village that the inmates had to leave the village and came running with the disciples to him, and requested him to take back his magic This he did and after that he came with his disciples to a village, Bohar, near the city of Rohtak.

(c) 'Kal Bhairve Panth'

Preceptor Shank Nath, the founder of this sect, was Preceptor Machhender Nath's disciple Once Shank Nath and Machhender Nath went to the country of 'Kamrup' where Shank Nath married a maid-servant and also had a serious quarrel with Gorkh Nath who was travelling through that country in the guise of a drummer of a dramatic party Gorakh Nath, Machhender Nath's ablest disciple turned Shank Nath's half body into that of a woman by magic When Machhender Nath came to know about the episode, the preceptor and Shank Nath again became a man.

(d) 'Bhartrihari Panth'

Bhartrihari was a king who later on became a monk He started this sect after his name The monks of this sect are known as "risle". They wear silken clothes and are strict vegetarian and never take wine. They believe in caste system and though have their disciples and followers among Bhangis, yet never accept any article except money from them. They hold "sat sangs" and preach among the sweepers.

(e) 'Gopi Chand Panth'

The Bhangis believe that Gopi Chand was the king of Bengal State. One day when his queens were giving him a bath, his mother observed him through a window, and wept. When Gopi Chand after finishing his bath came to his mother, she asked him to become a monk. Gopi Chand said, "My mother, don't you feel pleasure when you see your son reigning" The mother replied, "My son, if you would be a monk, you would be reigning over the whole universe You would be renowned for ever" It is believed that Gopi Chand obeying his mother, became disciple of preceptor Jilander Nath who was meditating in a deep pit outside a city The monks and preceptors of this sect hate opium, wine and in fact all intoxicants.

(f) 'Tola Panth'

Once Preceptor Machhender Nath was travelling with his famous disciple Gorakh Nath in 'Shankal Deep'. He also had his two sons Momin and Somin with him Momin and Somin offended Gorakh Nath so much, that he threw them on stones and stabbed them to death. He took out their veins and put them in the sun to be dried.

Preceptor Machhender Nath waited for the children for a long time and then asked Gorakh Nath about them Gorakh Nath produced *the veins of the children before Machhender Nath and related the* whole story. Machhender Nath and his wife began to weep bitterly. Seeing them in grief, Gorakh Nath created life in those veins once again. He awarded a 'Trishul' to Momin and gave him the blessing "You would be worshipped by 'Sarāvigi'[8] And the result was that *after a few days, he gained fame as Paras Nath Putting his hand* on Somin's head Gorakh Nath said, "My son your sect would spread very much in this world". Somin founded the Tola Sect.

The preceptor 'Guru' of this sect has to break an earthen pot by the power of his charms when initiating a new discipline. If he *fails to do so, he is not entitled to make any initiation.*

Besides these, there are many other sects like Darbday sect, Kavipa sect, Kunda sect, Saish sect, Nigin sect, Sakht sect, Nirmlay sect, Satianasi sect, Raval sect, the followers of which have lost their founder's names in antiquity.

2. KABIR AND ALLIED SECTS

In all branches of Kabir sects, the preceptors are believed to have the highest authority in this world and are worshipped. Offerings called 'Marzad' are made to them, and 'Chainamrit' from them *is taken with great reverence.*[9]

Kabir sect's preachings are :—

All religions are alike.
Save yourselves from evil acts.
Don't take meat and wine.
Pray in the name of preceptor 'Guru' daily.

The ultimate aim of all these teachings is to conquer all passions and desires and through them to realise ones own self.

The preceptors of Kabir sects firmly believe that Kabir[10], the founder of Kabir Panth has been, is, and will remain for all times In 'Satyog'[11] 'his name was Satsukrit, in 'Duapur'[12] he was named Muninder, in 'Traita'[13] he was called Karnakar and in 'Kalyog'[14] he is known as Kabir. Kabir is believed to have lived in the days of king Shah Shikandar. He ordered the king to release all the prisoners. The king had to obey and carry out his orders.

In the times of Kabir at Jagannath Puri a big temple was built successively ten times but each time it was washed away by the river Ganges. Kabir went there and due to his supernatural power, a platform was raised called "Kabir Chovtra", which is still there. The river Ganges had not the power to wash that away.

The followers of the Kabir sects have a strong conviction that all the religions of the world were founded by Kabirji. It was Kabirji who preached real knowledge to Mohammad and thus made him able to found the religion of Islam. When Christ was in search of truth, he met Kabirji who told him the truth Kabir is everywhere. He never dies, a real preceptor of Kabir's sect can see him at every time.

The Kabir sects deny the existence of God, but they take life (jiv) as God. Kabir says, "*jāin janni mukut dātā-tion hata na koi*" i e. Oh, life (Jiv) you are the creator of life and giver of salvation. You cannot be destroyed by any one " Kabir sects do not believe in caste or class. They do not worship statues or idols.

(a) **'Naval Panth'**

Naval sect is one of the many branches of Kabir's sect. Naval, the founder of this sect, was a sweeper from a village Harsala in Jodhpur state. He used to herd cows. It is said that once when he was looking after his cows in the jungle, a saint came and asked him to get fire in his 'chilam' (the uppermost part of hubble bubble). Naval obeyed the saint who was actually Kabirji. So Naval met Kabirji and became his disciple. He left the occupation of a herdman and later founded the Naval Sect.

Naval's fame spread far and wide and Bhangis from all parts of India joined his sect. The Bhangis believe that Naval had supernatural powers. Mangay of Andha Moghul Colony related two incidents in which Naval manifested his supernatural powers.

Once a pet cow of the ruler of Jodhpur State died. The ruler came to know about Naval, who was at once called to the ruler's palace and was requested to give life to the dead cow. Navalji wrapped himself in a coarse cloth and sat in meditation. To the great surprise of the ruler the cow became alive.

A cobbler's son died in the city of Ajmer Sharif The dead body was laid near Navalji and the boy became alive. Once in a 'satsangh', instead of sweets, some stones were kept but when Navalji touched them to distribute among the people, the stones at once turned into sweets.

(b) **'Ghisa Panth'**

This sect was founded by Ghisa a sweeper (Bhangi) of Khekhda village, district Meerut U P. He became a monk and claimed that Kabirji met him in a jungle. He founded his own sect, known as Ghisa Panth. Thousands of Bhangis in Delhi became his followers during his life time.

Ghisa was a strict follower of non-violence. It is said that he

had a horse which was poisoned by his servant. When he came to know about it he gave some money, to the latter and asked him to leave that place He had some supernatural power to influence those who came into his contact. Once a big land-lord of his village came with a sword to kill him But he was so much influenced by Ghisa's personality, that he at once threw his sword and became his disciple.

Some of the teachings of the Ghisa Panth are as follows :—

Ghisa impressed upon the Bhangis the importance of taking fresh fo d He tried to persuade them to leave taking stale food and the 'left-over' of the meals given by higher castes. He, as a true follower of non-violence, asked his followers not to take meat Once when explaining the creed of non-violence, he preached : "If you have lice in your clothes don't kill them, let them live on your blood " He fought against all kinds of superstitions He used to play on 'Iktara' (a saintly musical instrument) and sing songs instructing his followers to shake off all kinds of superstitions. One of his disciples, Harphool Singh, a Bhangi of Malka Ganj Subzi Mandi Colony, sang the following devotional song on Iktara, which was very dear to his preceptor Ghisa and which he used to sing very frequently. The song is as follows :

"Mata Chhidkan budhia Chali,
Larka hath ma banta,
Mata uupir gadhe lot ge,
Sab jutha he tanta
Bholi budhia ri bhajan bin-kase tiragi.
Ap hi lipe, ap he pote, ap he kadhe hoi,
Bhiton se putei mangey, phi e akal ki khoi,
Bholi budhia ri bhajan bin kase tiragi.

The old woman goes with a vessel of water in her hand to give a cold wash to the 'Mata' goddess. Donkies spoil the 'Mata' by lying down on it. Therefore all this is false. Oh old woman : how would you get 'moksha' (salvation) without worshipping God (Jiv) ? The women themselves plaster the wall, and then draw the figures of Hoi (a figure of female) and they pray for sons from her, it means they are foolish. Oh old woman · how would you get salvation without worshipping God (Jiv) ?"

These days in *Khekhdā* a fair is held in which Ghisa's followers and disciples from all parts of India come and worship him every year and in a beautiful temple, all books regarding Kabir's sect e g 'Kabir Bijak', 'Kabir Kasoti', 'Kabir Nasui' etc are kept.

Nanak, a 90 years old Bhangi, explaining the Ghisa sect, observed, "These days in the fair at Khekhda, much cohabitation

prevails. The preceptor, on the night of the fair, cohabits with all beautiful women whom he chooses for that purpose". The women and their relatives think it their good fortune due to the belief that a man becomes real follower of the Ghisa sect when his wife or sister cohabits with the preceptor. This act of cohabitation is called 'Guru's villās sangat' These days very few Bhangis in Delhi are the followers of this sect.

(c) **'Rae Dass Panth'**

Rae Dass, is the founder of this sect, was Kabir's disciple. He meditated for 88 years in standing posture, on one toe At the time of death the preceptor of the sect puts his hand on the dying person. All present there utter, "Rae Dass Satguru Ki Jai' i e victory to "Rae Dass the true preceptor". Besides Bhangis the Chamars (another untouchable caste) follow this sect in huge number.

(d) **'Rama Nandi Panth'**

Kabir's preceptor was Rama Nand and after his name, his sect is known as Rama Nandi Before Kabirji began preaching, Bhangis had no room in this sect. Due to their being untouchables no body from them could become a monk or a follower of this sect But it was Kabirji who showed the right way to the preceptor of this sect, by initiating the Bhangis both as monks and followers in his sect. And thus he established the principle of equality.

The following sects also believe in and follow Kabir's teachings and preachings.

(e) **'Dadu Panth'**

Dadu's preceptor was Bachan Dass, Once when he was preaching he met a strong opposition from some monks on whom he inflicted blindness with his supernatural powers. But when they begged pardon from him, he forgave them and restored their eye-sight The preceptor, when initiating a person to this sect cuts his scalp-hair and whispers and chants 'guru mantra' in his ear. The person presents him with five coconuts and five big balls of crystallise sugar (misri ke kuje).

(f) **'Sufi Panth'**

The monks of this 'Panth' live in funeral places and wear black clothes. They are very fond of taking meat and wine in skulls. They wear garland of big beads. But when they come to the cities, they wear white clothes. This sect was founded by Rahaha, a resident of the village of Kaingoli in Sindh.

(g) **'Ruhel Panth'**

Darya Khan, the founder of this sect was a 'Mali' by caste. He lived in a burial-ground, put on black clothes and iron bangles, and had a good control over evil spirits for using them in magic. Once in a debate, he met great opposition from other monks. He disappeared from that place without being seen by anybody. Another extraordinary event of his life is that once a monk unknowingly sat on his seat and he by the power of his magic burnt the seat.

The preceptors of this order wear black clothes and necklaces of big beads. In the 'Sat Sang' of the sect, they distribute pudding (Halwa) to all present there.

(h) **'Rol Panth'**

Rol, a weaver by caste was born in a small village in Jodhpur State. His mother's name was Dipa and father's Girdhari It is said that he gave life to a dead by his supernatural powers He spread Rol sect throughout India. In Delhi a few Bhangi families are the followers of the sect.

When a follower is initiated in this sect, he washes the preceptor's feet and his loin-cloth and collects that water in a cup. When he takes the water, all present sing :—

"*Nivaya Hamari pid,*
Rol Swami Pada Hue Band Tod,
Rol Ji Tum Pargate,
Jin Din Jam Ki Phansi Tod,
Bolo Rol Swami Ki Jay.

(Meaning)

Oh Rolji, remove our miseries and troubles,
Rol Swami is born to relieve mankind from miseries,
Rolji you have appeared,
You have broken the chains of miseries,
Speak aloud, victory to Rolji".

When a child is born, a black mark is applied on its forehead to prevent him or her from any evil influence. 'Khir' is prepared and most of it is taken by the members of the family of the mother while the rest is given to him. Then the black mark is removed from the child's forehead.

After the marriage ceremony is over, the bride goes with the preceptor, instead of with the bride-groom and lives with him for three days and nights. Then she is taken away by her husband to his house.

At the time of death, the preceptor's feet are washed with water

and some of it is poured in the dying person's mouth believing that the water helps the latter in carrying him to heaven. The dead is neither burnt nor buried but is thrown either in a tank, or in a well or river. The followers of Rol sect believe in :—

Jal pavitar, tumba pavitar aur pavitar kuvan.
Guru Rol Ke partap se muva chela pavitar huva.
Bolo Rol Swami Ki Jai

i. e.

Water is sacred, river is sacred and well is sacred,
Due to Rol's kindn ss, the evil doer follower has become pious.
Speak, victory to Rolji.

But these days the followers of Rol sect burn their dead and observe most of the Hindu-birth, marriage and death rites.

(1) 'Mahant Panth'

This sect is also a branch of Kabir sect (Panth). When the initiation ceremony is observed, the preceptor's semen is mixed with sugar and water and is given to the novice to drink, with the chanting of the words :

"Jane gur amrit pan kia,
So nar bhayo Bhagwa.
Ja ne amrit na pia,
Tah narak saman
Bahu Janam dube rah
Guru sat se na payo gian.
Ja na sat sangat kari guru ki,
Soi purush Mahan.

i e.

Those who have taken sacred water from preceptor's hands,
Have become like God.
Those who have not taken sacred water,
Are like hell.
Those who do not get true-knowledge from preceptor,
Remain evil-doers for many births.
Those who remain in preceptor's true company,
Are pious souls."

At the time of birth, the preceptor's finger is nipped, some blood is taken from it, and mixed with sugar, water and mother's milk and is given to the child, with the belief that the preceptor's good traits would thus pass on to the child.

When a marriage takes place, the preceptor sits at a fixed place. The bride and the bride-groom walk four times round him. The

bride-groom sits and the bride walks twice round him. Then the bride sits and the bride-groom walks twice round her

The dead are buried in sitting posture, with turmeric marks on their foreheads At the time of burial, bells are rung. After returning from the burial ground, the mourners wash their hands and feet and depart from each other saying, "*Jai bhāi, Jai bhāi*" i. e. victory to the brethren.

3. 'DATTATREYA AND ITS ALLIED SECTS'

Dattātrēyā first founded his own sect, named 'Dattātrēyā Panth' But later on, many of his followers founded their own sects though all of them followed the principles, rules, and customs laid by Dattātrēyā for his sect

Dattātrēyā's mother was Sati Anusuya When he was in search of reality and truth, he made 24 preceptors "gurus".

The main tenets of Dattatreya and of its allied sects are :—

'Kshmā', 'Mardoo', 'Ahinsā', 'Vrat', 'Dan', Shoch, 'Dayā' i. e. Forgiveness, Sweetness in speech, Non-violence, Fast, Charity, Purity and Pity.

Reflecting light on the wide-spread worship of Dattātreyā, W. Crooke writes, "In the same way from Himalaya to Bombay *Dattātreyā, deified mortal is reverenced by the vaishnavas as a partial* manifastation of Vishnu, and by the Saivas as a distinguished authority on the Yoga philosophy". (Crooke, 1896 123-4)

The following sub-sects, though with different names, mainly claim to follow Dattātreyā sect's preachings and principles.

(a) 'Kali Kamli wala Panth'

Acharya Mangal Dass of Dehradun was a great scholar of Hindu Philosophy. He learnt the four 'Vedās' by heart Though he was a monk of Dattātreyā sect, yet he felt the need of starting a new order and so he founded *Kāli Kāmli wālā* sect at Ujjain after a great heated discussion with many other monks.

(b) 'Vairagi Panth'

This sect is just a branch of Dattātreyā sect. Khooba Dass, Dattātreyā's disciple, was its founder. He was a resident of Pushkarji and a 'Māli' (florist) by caste. When, he was preaching at the fair in Pushkar, he had to face a strong opposition from other monk (sadhus). But due to his mysterious powers, he became successful in overcoming the opposition.

(c) 'Sāvde Panth'

The monks (Sadhus) of this sect generally live in jungles. They are fond of controlling spirits and so they generally visit burial grounds and funeral places. They exhort people to recite the name of God, 'Ram Bhajo'

Sobhat Dass, disciple of Imrit Dass, belonging to the village of Narainpur, in Jodhpur district was the founder of this sect.

(d) 'Radhaswami Panth'

The founder of this sect was Mahatama Gian Dass He was an able disciple of the monk of Jumna His village was Somna in Tehsil Kher

In the 'Sat Sang' of this sect, the preceptor 'guru' distributes pudding and some mixture of jaggary and water (sherbat) in *kachhā* earthen pots. When the followers of this sect meet, they greet each other by uttering : "Radhaswami ki Jai i e victory to Radha Swami" This sect has a few followers among the Bhangis of Delhi

At the time of death, the preceptor comes and whispers the preceptor's charm 'guru mantra' in the dying person's ear, and puts his hand on his head

(e) 'Nand Panth'

Nand sect is purely allied to Dattātreyā sect. Hans Niravan is the head preceptor of this sect these days. His headquarter is in Kashi When the followers of this sect meet, they greet one another. "Jai Hans Nirvan i e. victory to Hans Nirvan".

4 'NANAK PANTH'

This sect is just like the Sikh religion. Its founder was 'Guru' preceptor Nanak who was also the founder of the Sikh religion. The difference between Sikh religion and Nanak sect is that unlike the former the latter do not keep long hair, iron ring, comb, underwear and sword, but recognise 'Guru Granth' as the religious scripture.

(a) 'Udasi Sect'

Acharya Shri Chand, the eldest son and disciple of preceptor Nanak, was the founder of this sect. According to the followers of the sect, Acharya died at the age of 500 years This sect is allied to Nanak Sect. The monks of the sect have to wear 'Mudra' yet they should keep one of their clothes dyed in yellow (Bhagvan) colour. Generally they keep long hair.

Every follower of this sect is instructed and expected to recite the preceptor's charm every day after taking bath. But as far

as the practise is concerned, no body cares at all about this principle.

(b) 'Sat Sang'

The Bhangis hold 'Sat Sang'[16] To organize the work of 'Sat Sang' of a particular sect, there are regular office bearers appointed by the preceptor of the sect concerned. These office bearers are 'Mahant', 'Pir Mahant', 'Bhandari' and 'Kotwal' 'Mahant' and 'Pir Mahant' are those who are literate and know how to chant hymns and songs on drums. Kotwal's duty is to arrange for the meetings. 'Bhandari' keeps subscriptions.

Whenever a preceptor wants to appoint the office bearers of his sect, he holds a 'Sat Sang' which is attended by people belonging to all other sects. First in order to show respect to other sects, he presents a coconut, sugar, a piece of cloth, five pice, to every 'Mahant' of every sect. Then he proclaims loudly the names of those whom he wants to appoint the office bearers and presents them with a coarse clothes, 5 pice, sugar, a coconut saying, "Before God and in the presence of all of you, I appoint such and such person as 'Mahant' or 'Pir Mahant', or 'Kotwal' or 'Bhandari'.

When a 'Sat Sang' is held, a small table is placed on plastered ground. A white sheet is spread over the table on which are placed a few garlands of flowers, some sugar, fruits, coconuts and pictures of eminent preceptors, of all sects

The preceptor sits near the table. The people come with presents consisting of flowers, sugar, coconuts etc. First, they bow their heads five times before the table (Gaddi) and then before the preceptor, and present their offerings. Sometimes, they may touch his feet.

Devotional songs 'Bhajans' are chanted, A typical devotional song which all the Bhangi know is given below :

I have come to take shelter, oh my Master,
I have come to take shelter, oh my Master.
The man who does not take your shelter,
Will be in trouble-birth after birth
Others worship gods "Devtas" and goddesses 'Devis",
But I have a liking for you.
Since the time I have become a sensible man,
I have been bowing my head before you.
The kings of human beings and kings of gods come to you,
Listening to this I have also come to you.
I have left all pilgrimages and fasts, and have renounced the whole world..
I have put my heart and mind at your feet.

The Rishi Narad Rishi Brahmaji meditated in your Name,
You are the beginning and end of this universe,
It has been sung in the 'Vedas' and 'Puranas'.
Now you hold my hands ; oh my Master why you have forgotten me ?'

After songs, discussions on various topics relating to different sects take place. Questions about the preceptors of different sects are generally asked and replied. After the discussion is over, sweets called '*Bhāv*' are distributed. If the 'Sat Sang' is held in the house of a rich man, he distributes pudding called '*gaphā*' among all present there. Before leaving for their homes, all bow their heads before the preceptor to show respect to him. Thus a 'Sat Sang' ends.

Initiation to a sect is always done in a 'Sat Sang'. The preceptor takes some mixture of sugar and water (Sharbat) and reciting the spells, blows on it believing that by doing so, he is producing super-natural powers in it, so that when a novice takes it, his (preceptor's) supernatural traits pass on to him Sometimes the mixture consists of preceptor's *semen*, water and sugar as is the case with the 'Kanchli Panth'. The novice touches the preceptor's feet and presents him with sweets, clothes and cash. The latter then asks him (the novice) to take the mixture and whispers in his ear the preceptor's spells ('Guru' Mantra') which differs with different kinds of sects. For example in the Gorakh sects, the preceptor's spell is : 'Om Shiv Shiv'; while in the Kabir and its allied sects, it is 'Sat Sang'. In embracing Kabir sects, one also receives a necklace of beads from his preceptor.

Place of Preceptors in the Bhangi Society :—The preceptors occupy a significant position in the religious life of the Bhangis who believe that it is only with the former's help that one can get salvation and achieve human body without going through all the 84 lakhs of re-births *Yonis*. Further they are considered to have powers of curing diseases with the help of medicines and spells.

The preceptors are accorded the highest respect. When they stay with their followers, the latter every day message the former ; then give bath and delicious food, and make them comfort as much as possible. They are seated on cots while their followers sit on the ground. Their feet are touched with hands or foreheads by every Bhangi and they are offered presents of sweets, fruits, and money. Opium, '*charas, dhaturā* and *bhāng*' are considered to be the best presents, for the preceptors are very fond of taking them. The Bhangis joy knows no bounds when their preceptors putting their kind hands on their heads—give their blessings to them.

Every Bhangi who claims to be a follower of one or the other

sect, must remember by heart a prayer known as 'Guru Satuti' and it is his religious duty to recite that every day after washing his hands and feet. The prayer which is, as follows, amply shows the position of a preceptor in the Bhangi community

Keep trust in the preceptor's feet,
Preceptor is all in all.
He removes all kinds of chains,
And is the giver of salvation.
He is the soul of the whole universe.
And has come to the world
To give salvation to the soul
Without a preceptor, there is no wisdom,
Without a preceptor there is no knowledge of truth,
Without a preceptor there is no good thought,
Without a preceptor there is no meditation
Whoever, may be high or low, comes to his feet,
He gives him salvation,
He tells what is unreal,
And gives high and pure thoughts.
The preceptor's feet are like true light,
They successfully carry one to the other bank of this world.
The person, who knowingly disobeys the preceptor,
Goes to hell and his body becomes scourged

All the Bhangis of Delhi belong to one of the above sects and are in constant contact with their preceptors and their teachings. The frequent "Sat Sangs" or religious gatherings, further inculcate in them religious beliefs and love for higher form of "pure habits". The Bhangis, thus, in general, are fast being sanskritised or Brahmanised under the influence of the above mentioned sects.

NOTES

1. It will be interesting to know that W. Crooke mentions *Balmiki* as the ancestor of two hunting tribes namely *Aheriyas* and *Baheliyas* who identify Balmiki with 'Lal Beg'. To quote him here, "The Aheriyās and Baheliyās, both hunting tribes of North-Western Provinces, claim descent from him (Bālmiki) and he has now by an extra-ordinary feat in hagiolatary become identified with 'Lal Beg', the low caste godling of sweepers"—W. Crooke- Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India Vol. I page 195-199.

2 The following will serve as example (a) 'A hereditary sacerdotalism with Brahmans for its Levites, the vitality of which is preserved by the social institution of caste, and which may include all shades and diversities of religion native to India as distinct from the foreign importations of Christianity and Islam, and from the later outgrowths of Buddism, more doubtfully of Sikhism, and still more doubtfully of Jainism'. (Sir D. Ibbetson, census Report, Punjab,

1881, par 214) (b) 'The large residuum that is not Sikh, or Jain, or Budhist, or professedly Animistic, or included in one of the foreign religions, such as Islam, Mazdaism, Christianity or Hebraism' (Sir J A Baines, General Report on the Census of India, 1891, p 158) (c) 'The collection of rites, worships, beliefs, traditions, and mythologies that are sanctioned by the sacred books and ordinances of the Brāhmans and are propagated by Brahmanic techniques (Sir A Lyall Asiatic Studies, 1899. Vol II, p 288) (d) 'What the Hindus, or the majority of them in a Hindu community, do' (B Guru Prasad Sen Introduction to the Study of Hinduism 1893 p 9) (e) 'Magic tempered by metaphysics' (Sir H Risley, The People of India, 1914 edition, 0 233). Of these, the first is inadequate, because it makes no mention of belief, but only of ritual The second merely amounts to the statement that Hinduism is everything which is not anything else. The third as a correct definition of only a part of Hinduism, i e Brahmanical Hinduism The fourth cannot be regaraded as defining a religion at all, though it would, if 'believe' or 'worship', or (better still) both, were substituted for 'do' The last is professedly a mere epigram, yet it is as informing as any of the others.

3 Gorakh Nath has been described as a saint in numerous legends prevalent in the Punjab and Frontier Provinces (A Glossary of the Tribes and castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces (p. 125, 173 181, Vol. I).

4. Gorakh Nath is the name of the founder of Gorakh Sect.

5. Three tanged iron bar. It is a noted symbolic weapon of Lord Shiva

6. According to the Hindus belief the time since the beginning of this universe is divided into four divisions— the first was *Sat Yug*, the second was *Duapur*, the third *Traita* and the fourth i e the presant is *Kal Yug*.

7. Ancient name of Ceylon.

8. A Higher Hindu Caste.

9 Preceptor's feet are washed with water which is collected and is called "*Charnamrit*".

10 Kabir is a patron saint of the Hindu weavers in the Punjab and Frontier Provinces a Glossary of The Tribes And Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces Vol I, p 398.

11, 12, 13 and 14. These are the Hindu names of the divisions of the time since the universe has come into existence

15. W Crooke writes about it, "The last of the more important Vaishnava sects is that of the Raedasis, who take their name from their teacher Rae-Dass who was a tanner This sect has a large number of adherents among the Chamārs of tanners of Upper India. It is an interesting example of the reformed Viashnavism, extending to the despised menial races. They follow the theistic form of belief venerating one omnipotent, all seeing god, to whom a long worship is due". (Crooke, 1897 · 255-6)

16. Meetings for religious discussion and for chanting religious hymns and songs.

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RELIGION IN DALEKE
A SIKH VILLAGE

Indera P Singh

Daleke is a small village situated at a distance of five miles from Taran Taran in the Amritsar district of the Majha area of Punjab. This area is known as the cradle of Sikhism and most of the population professes Sikh religion Practically every second village can boast of a gurdwara built in honour of the visit of one or the other Sikh gurus Sikhs all over India and abroad consider the earth of Amritsar sacred and a certain amount of sanctity is attached to the inhabitants of this area too, because they have had the privilege of benefiting from the teachings of all the Gurus as well as the existence in Amritsar of their holiest Gurdwara Darbar Sahib known popularly as Golden Temple. Sikhs have gathered since the time of their gurus at 'Akal Takht'—the throne of the Timeless (God) in Darbar Sahib to take decisions of social and political nature affecting the whole community.

The villagers of Daleke were Hindu until the 17th century, when the founder of the village, Dalla Singh, embraced Sikhism and is said to have been baptised by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Today all persons belonging to Jat (farmers), Kamboh (farmers), Kumhar (tradesmen), Tarkhan (Carpenters), Cheemba (Washermen), and Nai (Barber) castes profess Sikhism. Except four Christian families, all other Mazhabis (landless labourers) are also Sikhs, five families of whom had been converted to Sikhism recently i. e. after partition (1947). The three families of Brahmins living in the village are Hindus Thus except members of seven families of Brahmins and Christians all other inhabitants belonging to 124 families are followers of Sikhism. They have been under the influence of Islam for about four hundred years during the Muslim rule. Panjab, being in the north, had borne the brunt of Muslim invasions much more than any other part of India ; and Sikhism came into vogue in the wake of Muslim invaders. While West Panjab (now in Pakistan) was predominantly inhabited by Muslims, there was a sizable population of Muslims in East Panjab (India) too Even in Daleke there were about twenty Muslim families belonging to Arains (Vegetable grower), Sakka (Water carrier), Julaha (weaver), Teli (Oilmen) and Lohar (blacksmith) castes Pallasor—the next village to Daleke was mainly populated by Muslims. All of them however, have migrated to

Pakistan in 1947, while Sikh refugees from Pakistan have been settled in their place Thus Daleke villagers besides having their primitive tribal beliefs have been influenced by Brahminism, Islam and Sikhism.

All these religions have left their impression on the Daleke villagers. Although a Daleke villager professes to be a Sikh he keeps on paying respect to his ancestral and village gods as well as the Devis He not only visits the shrines of Muslim Pirs, but also organizes fairs in their honour after the exodus of Muslims to Pakistan. However, the names of these Muslim Pirs have been changed to Sikh names and Sikh Holy Books have been installed in these shrines. It is interesting to note that the exodus of Muslims from this area has not resulted in ending the worship of these Pirs, as well as the rapidity with which they have been transformed from Muslim to Sikh. Since these Pirs had acquired some kind of universa ization as ocal gods, the continuity of their worship is not surprising But the villagers who were now only Sikhs do not also like to worship Pirs of the Muslim (whom they had driven out from their midst), and changed their names to those of Sikhs While the villagers did not dare to stop celebrating the anuual festivals of the local gods—Pirs out of fear, they also could not continue to worship them as Muslims because of ridicule from other Sikhs. It would be worth noting what happens to these Pirs in the next decade—they may retain their new names and new modes of worship or may revert to their erstwhile names. A legend that Jogi Pir was Jogi Bir is being built up Nor is this process without precedent-Guga Bir (a Hindu snake god) worshipped universally in North India is referred to as Guga Pir by his Muslim worshippers

Another process noticed in the religious beliefs of the Daleke villagers is the creation of Sikh saints, and Sikh places of worship which have been connected with the possession of similar supernatural powers as that of their primitive gods and Muslim Pirs. An attempt has been made in the following pages to discuss the religious beliefs and practices of the Daleke villagers and analyze the impact of various religions as well as the assimilation of worship of tribal, and Hindu, gods as well as Muslim Pirs into their concept of Sikhism. The religious beliefs of the Daleke villagers have been discussed in four sections :—(i) Belief in ancestral and village gods, (ii) Hindu Gods and goddesses, (iii) Muslims Pirs, (iv) Sikh gurus and saints

WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS AND VILLAGE GODS :—The founder of the village, Dala Singh, after whom it takes its name, is worshipped by all the villagers. A fortress like structure stands towering over the entire village. It is surrounded by the houses of

the direct descendants of Sardar Dala Singh. Whenever a local bridegroom brings his bride for the first time into the village the couple before entering their own house pay a visit to the shrine of Dala Singh known as Baba Sheedi Sahib. It is believed that Dala Singh died fighting in a battle and thus attained martyrdom. He is never referred by name but as a martyr (Sheedi). On the birth of a child, offerings are made at this shrine. The milk of the first 3-4 days when the buffalo begins to give milk is also offered to the shrine. So are offered the first corns, wheat or all other agricultural produce at each harvesting season Every day an earthen lamp filled with ghee is lighted by one of the direct descendants of Dala Singh. Earthen lamps are lighted by others also when they had promised to do so either in anticipation of a favour or on the fulfilment of some wish The worship of Baba Sheedi Sahib is in fact the worship of "Jatheras" (ancestor), which is a common practice in all Panjab villages. A Sikh flag flies over the top floor of the fortress and before the construction of the present Gurdwara, the Sikh Holy Book was kept there and it was used as a Gurdwara also. It had not been in use for a long time but in 1957 had been cleaned and embroidery classes were conducted there by the Community Projects Administration. There is no priest to receive the offerings made at this shrine. Whenever any offerings are made, they are distributed among the children who gather around them.

Vishwa Karma is the ancestral god of the Tarkhans (carpenter) and Lohars (Blacksmiths). On his birthday, which comes in the month of October the Tarkhans and Lohars worship their implements and tools and light an earthen lamp before them. They enjoy a holiday and under no circumstances touch their tools for any work. Some of them go to Amritsar to join a procession taken out in honour of the birthday of Vishwakarma.

Valmiki is the ancestral god of the Chuhras (sweepers) and is worshipped only by them. Chuhras professing different faiths—Sikhism (Mazhbi), Islam (Musali), or Hinduism all worship Valmiki and consider him their ancestor. His abode is on the 'Jand' (Prosopis Spicigera) tree, and besides celebrating his birthday they light earthen lamps on a platform near a 'Jand' tree every Thursday and on Masya. They affix red flags made of cloth on the branches of the 'Jand' tree if some of their wishes are fulfilled. 'Jand' is considered as the abode of Valmiki by other sweeper castes elsewhere in North India too. The offerings are made in the form of 'Churmas' made of bread and gur a Hindu preparation but a 'deg' (a big utensil) of rice is also offered sometimes as in case of the Pirs The offerings are distributed among the Mazhbi children of the village.

The belief in Valmiki was strengthened greatly in 1956 during the heavy floods in the village. When the Mazhbi housing area was surrounded by flood waters from all sides, all of them got together and worshipped Valmiki. They also constructed a second mud-wall around their houses to save them from being washed away. But that day the flood waters began to recede and they believe that this was due to their collective worship and the benevolence of their deity.

Worship of Muslim Pirs and Faqirs

The worship of the tombs of men supposed to have possessed supernatural powers has been very common in this area and various travellers even in the 13th century have referred to this practice. Their worship has not been stopped after the exodus of Muslims to Pakistan. The only difference has been that those in charge of these tombs are Sikhs and not Muslims. Instead of having two separate kitchens for Hindus and Muslims they have two separate kitchens for Mazhbis and the higher caste Sikhs People keep on making promises to attend the fairs organized annually in the honour of these Faqirs if their wishes are fulfilled. They also promise to offer money, food or a cloth to the tomb depending upon wish and the status of the person. The annual fairs are organized by the entire village, and held where the tomb is located Collections in the form of grain and money are made for the expenses. Qawalis in the praise of Prophet Mohammad were sung throughout the day and night before partition (1947), but in most of these shrines like that of Jogi Pir and Sher Shah, Sikh Holy Books have been installed and the names of the Faqirs changed to Joga Singh and Sher Singh. Some of these Pirs are benevolent and are believed to grant the wishes of those who have faith in them when they are properly propitiated but they can also get angry if any disrespect is shown to them. They are believed to destroy the entire family or even the whole village to take revenge. Surrounded as they are by all kinds of dangers of losing their crops because of sudden fires, floods or pests, or their lives because of sudden or protracted illness and accidents, the villagers do not take any chance of displeasing the Pirs Some of the Pirs are revered because of their general qualities to offset disease or other disasters, while others possess special qualities.

Jogi Pir, Pir Dhori, Sheikh Pata, Rode Shah, Sher Shah Vali and Haji Shah are the various Muslim Faqirs and Pirs worshipped by the villagers of Daleke. An annual fair at the shrine of Jogi Pir is organized by the Nihangs—a militant group among Sikhs who have now occupied this erstwhile Muslim shrine. Jogi Pir is believed

to possess supernatural powers for bestowing rain, as well as begetting children He is also worshipped as a Jathera (ancestral god of Jats) by the villagers of Manochal, where this shrine is situated. It is at a distance of 2 miles from Daleke, and many villagers (only males) go to attend this fair. In 1957, when we were in the village, about forty persons of Daleke belonging to various castes visited the shrine and the fair.

Pir Dhori is believed to possess supernatural powers of curing rabies. A shrine over his tomb has been constructed at a distance of about 3 miles from Daleke by his followers. A Brahmin from the Dhori village served him for many years and the Dhori Pir has bestowed him (the Brahmin) with supernatural powers to cure persons suffering from rabies by means of a loaf of bread which has been charged with supernatural powers by the Brahmin after singing praises of the Pir Dhori over it The Brahmin also acts as the priest of Dhori Pir's shrine and conducts an annual fair in his honour.

Sheikh Pata is believed to have supernatural powers to restore the flow of milk of buffaloes or cows who have suddenly stopped giving it Majha area in which Daleke is situated being famous for its cattle-wealth, this Pir is greatly in demand The owners of the animal which has stopped giving milk pledge to offer Kheer (rice-milk pudding) at the shrine of Sheikh Pata, situated at a distance of 5 miles from Daleke. After the buffalo has started giving milk, its owners prepare rice-milk pudding and take it to the shrine. It is believed that if somebody eats the pudding intended for Sheikh Pata on the way to the shrine, little worms appear in the pudding and make it uneatable. This shows the powers of Sheikh Pata, and if anyone insists on eating the worm-filled pudding he cannot escape the wrath of Sheikh Pata and is bound to die. Many of the informants asserted that they had witnessed the appearance of worms in the pudding of those who wanted to be dishonest to Sheikh Pata. Another occurence related in confirmation of the possession of supernatural powers by Sheikh Pata was that the pudding always became warm as it was offered at his shrine irrespective of the fact that it may have been brought from a long distance and become cold long ago.

Sher Shah Vali and Haji Shah are both believed to have supernatural powers and shrines have been constructed over their graves at the outskirts of Pallasor village at a distance of 1½ miles from Daleke. An annual fair is organized in their honour, when those whose wishes have been granted by these two Faqirs offer sweets or cloth-sheets for the grave.

Many stories are current about their supernatural powers.

Once Sher Shah asked a shopkeeper to give him some 'misri' (crystal sugar) The shopkeeper said that he did not stock any 'misri'. But the Faqir said "Go and look for it inside your shop". And when he went to look into his store, it was full of 'misri'. A recent incident reported was that of an old woman, who tried to cut a branch of the 'Kikkar' (Acacia Arabica) tree growing near the tomb of Sher Shah Vali. She at once contracted paralysis and saved her life only by praying at his shrine and begging his forgiveness. Pallasor was inhabited mainly by Muslims who have since left for Pakistan and they held Sher Shah in great reverence. Although the Sikh farmers from W. Panjab have replaced Muslims in this village, they have continued the tradition of organizing an annual fair, but have changed the name of the Faqir to Sher Singh.

Rode Shah : The grave of Rode Shah is situated at a distance of about one mile from Daleke. He is also believed to have possessed supernatural powers ; but no annual fair is organized in his honour. The Daleke villagers were not clear about his special powers but related an incident that showed that he must be feared and it did nobody any good if he is displeased. Recently a road was to be constructed joining Pollasor and Daleke which was to pass through the area where the grave of Rode Shah is located. He appeared in a dream to the contractor who was building the road and threatened him with dire consequences if he dared to demolish his grave. The contractor sought permission from the government to change the route of the road in order to leave Rode Shah's grave in tact. This was allowed by the government and explains a small curve in the road to Daleke.

Another incident reported in the village was that of a farmer who three years ago tried to till the eight bighas of land attached to Rode Shah's grave which had been lying fallow for a number of years because of the exodus of Muslims to Pakistan. His bullocks died instantaneously on their entry into the fields and the farmer also died immediately after.

Thel : The first milk of a cow or buffalo is never used by the owners until rice-milk pudding has been offered at the shrine of the Sheedi Sahib. On the first Masya (new-moon day) after the cow or buffalo has started giving milk, rice-milk pudding is prepared from the milk of both times and offered at the Taran Taran Golden Temple. During this period milk or its preparations like 'lassi' (whey), butter or curds are used only by the members of the family owning the cattle. After offering rice-milk pudding at the Taran Taran Temple, milk and its preparations may be distributed among the

relatives, neighbours or servants. These offerings are made to ensure prosperity and freedom from disease of the livestock. Some of the villagers offer rice-milk pudding at the Taran Taran Temple on every Masya. Some Mazhbis whose livelihood is entirely dependent on selling milk do not offer it at the temple even on the first Masya. Some families offer it at the shrine of 'Pir Chanda Sahib'.

Reeri is another ceremony performed by Daleke villagers to express their gratitude to earth for giving them the wheat crop. It is held in the month of Jaith (May-June) on the last day of threshing wheat. The last grains are not taken home, but distributed among children. Before abandoning the threshing ground it is cleaned and whey is sprinkled over the earth to quench its thirst.

Belief in other Spirits :

There is a strong belief in spirits among the Daleke villagers despite the fact that all of them profess Sikhism which preaches against such beliefs. When a sick person is not cured by medicine, his family seeks the help of a person who is believed to possess supernatural powers of driving out the evil spirit which has taken its abode in the body of the sick person. The 'Khednewala' or those possessing supernatural powers have acquired such powers by spending a number of years as an apprentice to one already known to possess them. They also issue tawits (talismans)-a Muslim influence—to be worn around the neck to avoid disease or evil eye. Tawits are also acquired to earn more money or to beget sons. They are also obtained to harm one's enemies—death of the enemy or the destruction of an enemy's crops may be desired In such cases the tawit is somehow smuggled to the house of the enemy and sometimes given to the particular person in his food. The help of specialists in preparing tawit is also sought for by the wives to bring their husbands under their control and to create discord between him and his mother. Such tawits were mostly given by Muslim priests, but now they are prepared by Sikhs and Hindus also who issues tawits of all kinds. Also an old woman popularly called Jadugarni (magician woman) was known to be expert in giving tawits or toonas for creating discord in families, and for getting husbands under full control.

The educated members among Daleke families decried the use of tawits and other similar practices, but as often happens, they instead believe that some of the Sikh shrines and saints are vested with powers attributed to 'Shagird' (disciples) of the Pirs. If a person (usually a woman) is not cured by medicines and is believed to have been possessed by some spirit or ghost, she is taken to a Sikh saint

who drives out the offending spirit by reading verses from the Sikh Holy Book. It is firmly believed that no spirit or ghost can withstand the power of the Sikh prayers.

Some of the Sikh shrines are also believed to possess supernatural powers to cure certain diseases, where the Daleke villagers go without any loss of face from their more educated neighbours. Gurdwara 'Dukh Niwaran' meaning Gurdwara 'End of Miseries' situated at a distance of eight miles from Daleke is often visited by the villagers when they are not able to get rid of disease etc. They take a dip in the adjoining tank and offer pershad at the temple. A dip in the tank of the Golden Temple, Taran Taran is believed to cure leprosy and explains the presence of a large number of patients suffering from leprosy in Taran Taran. The local Christian Mission has also set-up a leprosy hospital here. Gurdwara Nanaksar (ten miles from Daleke) is also visited by Daleke villagers as it is believed that young children suffering from 'Soka' (atrophy wasting) can be cured by a dip in the temple's tank. Gurdwara Cheherta (18 miles from Daleke) is also believed to possess similar powers. A pond in the village Chambla is believed to have curative powers for skin diseases. A dip in the Darbar Sahib tank (Golden Temple), Amritsar, is considered not only holy but its water is believed to possess magical powers for curing all kinds of diseases and alleviating misery-financial or otherwise. Thus we note that the only change has been in the temple or saints and not in the fundamental belief in spirits or in the magical powers of persons believed to possess supernatural powers. Sikh temples and Sikh saints have replaced the shrines of primitive gods and Muslim saints. In some cases Muslim saints have been converted to Sikhism by changing their names and installing the Sikh Holy Book in their shrines. New legends have also been built up to support their claims of being Sikhs e.g., it is claimed that Jogi Pir was actually a Hindu a Jogi Bir.

Next to one's kin, cattle are most dear to the Daleke villagers. They depend for their milk and its products on cattle. Cow dung is used as a fuel while oxen are indispensable for various field operations Besides propitiating Chanda Pir and the Sikh temple at Taran Taran, the villagers perform a special kind of Toona to save their cattle from epidemics. This Toona is performed by one of the Brahmins of Daleke. He sprinkles 'Kachi lassi' (whey) in each house continuously for five days and also recites some 'Mantras'. He also seals the village by fixing nails on all its four corners. No cattle are allowed to leave or enter the village. The Brahmin then erects a gate with neem leaves and places an earthen pitcher containing leaves near

it over which mantras have been recited. All the cattle in the village are made to pass through this gate. The Brahmin keeps on reciting mantras and sprinkling whey as they pass through the gate. This ceremony is believed to immunise the cattle against any epidemic No hearth is ignited in the village when this ceremony is being performed. The Brahmin conducting this toona gets one seer of grain from each family in the village for his labours.

Daleke villagers like peasants elsewhere want to ensure a good crop. The previous practice was to ask the Brahmin to find out an auspicious day for ploughing It is believed that if earth is ploughed when sleeping, the crops will not be good So the Brahmin tells not only an auspicious date but also performs a toona by sprinkling Kachi Lassi in the field and reciting some mantras This kind of toona is rarely performed now-a-days and the Daleke villagers instead go to the gurdwara and start ploughing after having offered prayers before the Sikh Holy Book for the grant of a good crop.

Hindu Gods and Goddesses

Daleke has been subjected to Sanskritization for a long period like Kishen Garhi ,studied by Marriot; and it is worthwhile to discuss the cults and worship of gods of the great Hindu traditions which has persisted inspite of the Islamic influence for the last 1,000 years and Sikh influence for the last 300 years. First and foremost deity that comes to our notice is Devi. She is worshipped in two forms–Sitala and Jwala Mukhi. Sitala is believed to be the cause of small-pox and a small shrine made of a platform of bricks stands outside the village in her honour. When a child suffers from small-pox or an allied disease, a garland of flowers brought from Sitala's shrine is brought and kept near the bed of the child On his complete cure he is taken to pay his obeisance to the Devi and whey is poured over its shrine Sweets are distributed to the children. Some of the village families do not take their children to the Sitalas Devi's shrine, but to the gurdwara and get a garland from the granthi (Sikh priest). Even those families who visit the *Sitala's* shrine *invariably* pay their respects to the gurdwara also.

The other 'Devi' worshipped in the village is 'Lata Wali Devi' Devi of flames also known as Jwalamukhi Devi She has her shrine at Jwalamukhi in Jammu district at a volcanoe site. An annual pilgrimage is held there in the month of August—September, when people come from all parts of the country and especially from the Punjab to pay their homage. This pilgrimage is undertaken in fulfilment of some wishes by the grace of the Devi Devi's followers

are termed its Bhagats and there were a few of them among the Kumhar (potter's) families. Besides going on a pilgrimage of the Devi's shrine, night long singing of hymns in praise of the Devi is also resorted to by the family whose particular wish has been fulfilled. During our stay one such ceremony was held in the house of a Kumhar and was attended by some members of practically all castes in the village. The Bhagats-specialists in singing songs in praise of the Devi, were brought from Taran Taran. A large wick in an earthen pot filled with pure ghee was lighted as a symbol of the Devi. The participants as well as the singers were Sikhs and wore all Sikh symbols-uncut hair, sword, etc. The Bhagats of the Devi asserted that even the tenth guru Gobind Singh had worshipped the Devi in Anandpur before forming the Khalsa Panth. (This was denied by others). Although occasional night long singing was organized in Daleke, there was no worship of the Devi on 'Ashtami' as is common in Ramkhera or Kishen Garki except in the Brahmin homes.

FESTIVALS : Considering the festivals celebrated by Daleke villagers we find that seven of them are probably universal among Hindus in North India *i. e.* Nirata, Rakhri, Shradhas, Dasehra, Diwali, Maghi and Holi. Other Hindu festivals celebrated only by Brahmins *i e.* Hindus of the village are Janam Ashtami, Bahi Sajri (stale bread), Tikka and Shivratri. These festivals are not celebrated by the Sikhs or Christians. Other festivals having a wide regional distribution and celebrated by all are Vasakhi, Guga Naumi, Lauri, Sawani, and Basant. Karva Chauth having also regional distribution in North India is celebrated only by the Brahman families of Daleke. The three festivals organized in honour of Muslim Pirs are of local distribution and are direct result of Muslim influence. One third of the festivals celebrated in Daleke are in honour of Sikh gurus and heroes and are celebrated by the Sikhs alone. However, the birthday of Guru Arjan and the festival of Masya (new moon day) has acquired a local status of universalization. All Daleke villagers irrespective of the fact whether they are Sikh, Hindu, or Christian go for a dip in the sacred tank attached to the Golden Temple at Taran Taran. The first milk of cow or buffalo is also offered in the form of rice-milk pudding by villagers professing different faiths at the Golden Temple at Taran Taran.

Sikh rationalizations have been added to four out of the seven festivals of the Greater Hindu Tradition *i. e,* Dasehra, Diwali, Maghi and Holi. The Sikh villagers claim that they celebrate Diwali to commemorate the return of their sixth Guru, Hargobind to Amritsar after his release from the Gwalior fort along with 52 other Rajas.

Similarly Maghi is celebrated because on this day 40 Sikhs from Majha area (where Daleke is situated) went to fight at Muktsar after being ridiculed by their womenfolk for having deserted the Guru. They died as martyrs fighting to the last man. A common saying in Daleke as elsewhere in Panjab is that Hindus celebrate Holi while Sikhs have Hola. To the Sikhs Hola which falls on the day next to Holi is more important. On this day, since the time of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh annual competition in sports, wrestling, sword-fighting, stick-fighting and other sports of warfare are organized annually at Anandpur near Nangal. Some Sikhs from Daleke go there every year to join others who come from all over India

A similar synchretic Sikh explanation for observance of two of the regional festivals namely Vasakhi and Basant, is also noticed. Vasakhi is celebrated as the birthday of the Khalsa—the day when the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh created the Khalsa at Anandpur and enjoined upon his followers to keep five k's-'Keshas' uncut hair ; 'Kara'—an iron bangle ; 'Kanga'—a comb ; Kach—Short drawers, Kirpan - sword. Basant is celebrated at Cheherta Sahib Gurdwara at a distance of 18 miles from Daleke, and a dip in the tank attached to this temple is considered very auspicious for begetting children. Basant is celebrated to honour the martyrdom of Haqiqat, a 17 year old Sikh who refused to embrace Islam. As explained earlier the regional festivals celebrated in connection with the Muslim Faqirs have also been transformed into Sikh festivals by changing the names of the Faqirs and installing Sikh Holy Book in their shrines

The Hindu gods and goddesses still remembered by the Daleke villagers are Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Shanker, Indra, Hanuman, Parvati and Darupadi according to the answers given by fifty informants belonging to various castes. The most commonly known god is Rama and Ram Lila was performed until 1921–22 in the precints of Golden Temple at Taran Taran and many Daleke villagers had witnessed it. The Ram Lila performance was stopped after the Akalis took over the management of the gurdwara. Krishna is remembered with his gopis (consorts) while legends about the sexual prowess and exploits of Shiva are very common. Sita is the symbol of ideal Indian womanhood. Indra is also known to have an Inderpuri full of beautiful 'paris' (fairies). Hanuman is commonly known as 'Monkey God' and is believed to possess supernatural powers for safe crossing of rivers. The legend of Krishna saving Draupadi from ignominy when Dusashan wanted to outrage her modesty by pulling off her 'sari' is also often related in the village. However there are no shrines or temples of these gods and goddesses in the village.

Nor do the Sikh villagers visit any Hindu temples in Taran Taran or Amritsar when they go there for selling their farm products or for other purposes. In Amritsar there is a temple called 'Ram Tirath' where an annual festival is held on Ram Naumi—birthday of Rama. It is believed that Sita with her two sons 'Lav' and 'Kush' lived there in their exile. Lav is believed to have founded Lahore and Kush—Kasoor.

Having described the worship of ancestors, spirits, Hindu gods and Muslim Faquirs, let us now discuss the form of worship and ritual of Sikhism as practised by Daleke villagers.

Sikh Religious Practices.

A Sikh has been defined as one who believes in the ten Gurus and the Granth Sahib in the Gurdwara Management Act under which elections to the Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (Management Committee) are held every five years. Only adult Sikhs are entitled to vote Fifty persons of different castes and sexes both were interviewed to elicit information on whom they considered to be a Sikh. All of them laid stress on outer symbols, and said that a Sikh must not cut hair on any part of the body and wear an iron bracelet on his wrist. He should keep a sword, comb and wear short drawers Only four persons intrviewed added that a 'Sikh must say his morning (Japji) and evening (Rehras) prayers. It is significant to note that according to the definition of a Sikh there are two kinds of Sikhs—Keshadhari—those keeping long hair, and Sahajdhari *i e.* clean shaven ; but the Daleke villagers did not consider Sahjdharis as Sikhs but call them Hindus. In the towns especially among Khatris the two kinds of Sikhs are acknowledged. The villagers attach so much importance to outer symbols that even the workers of the Communist Party in Punjab villages find it politically expedient to proclaim that their leaders are true Sikhs—never cut their hair and recite their prayers regularly. Cutting of long hair and beards by a Sikh meets with great disapproval in the village. Pressure is brought upon him by the elders of his family and of the village. The person who has cut his long hair and beard is called 'patit' (the fallen), and is threatened with both social and economic ex-communication by his family as well as the village. Some of them are known to have grown beards again. One major example is of K. Singh who had shaved and cut his long hair during his stay in Canada, but regrew them on his return. However, one case was mentioned of a young boy who had cut his long hair and did not regrow them even after threats and pleadings of his parents and other

members of his family. He was not allowed to visit his family for a couple of years. Then the family slowly reconciled itself; and he was admitted into the family. This was only done when he seriously fell ill and had to be brought home for treatment. Cases were also known of the in-laws not sending their daughters to a husband who had cut his long hair. But in most cases she returned to him after some time if he had not married again, even if he had not regrown his hair. Our informants asserted that reconciliation of the family with its 'patit' members takes less time now than it used to earlier.

It is worthwhile to consider the extent of observance of the essentials listed by the Daleke villagers in actual practice. The most conspicuous is uncut hair and beards. All the grown—up and young men of Daleke can be recognized as Sikhs because of their beards and turbans. However, all those who have had some education and contacts with the nearby towns tied their beards close to their face. About half of them had tied their beards close to their face and used a hair fixer while the other half of them had their beards trimmed. The Jats who occupy the highest position among Sikhs do not get their beards trimmed by the Nai (barber) but use tweezers to weed out extra hair on their face; while the Mazhbis make free use of scissors and the Nai. About one fourth of the young school children when being weighed and measured were found to have short hair on their heads. An explanation given by their elders was that they were too young to take care of long hair and it had been cut to remove lice. The tendency to trim beards was said to have increased after Partition for two reasons. The major reason is the increase in smuggling with Pakistan, and after having their beards trimmed they cannot be distinguished easily from their Muslim counterparts. Desire to look young was cited as another reason. Danger of lice in long beards was given as another reason.

Kara an iron bangle on the wrist was found to be worn by all the villagers. Even the members of the Brahmin families wore it. Their explanation for doing so was that they also believed in the ten Sikh Gurus. Some of the rich Zamindars wore gold bangles instead of iron ones. An iron bangle is given to a child immediately on its birth. It is believed to ward off dangers and protect the child when it is left alone. This probably explains the wearing of iron bangles by almost all Punjabi Hindu children upto an age of 4-5 years.

Kangha—comb is also invariably kept by all the Daleke villagers. The men and women keep a special kind of small comb, which fits in conveniently under the bun of hair.

Kirpan—sword is also carried by most of the young and grown-

up people. Its size varies from one inch to three feet. The long swords ($2\frac{1}{2}$-3 feet) are carried in hand while visiting friends or relatives in the neighbouring town. They are often used to settle disputes by fighting or to protect oneself on the way. The nine inch long sword is worn in a belt around the waist or across the body. Only ten persons including the 'granthi' (keeper of the gurdwara) were seen wearing such a sword. Most of them carry a one inch sword tied to their comb with a thread. One can also purchase combs with tiny swords glued to them.

Kachha—short drawers was also noticed to be invariably worn. Most of the Mazhbis and other poor families wore nothing but short drawers and a shirt. The well-to-do persons wore pyjamas or trousers over them.

It should, however, be mentioned that while Sikh villagers begin to maintain uncut hair and wear an iron bangle from childhood, other symbols especially sword is considered essential only after a person has taken Amrit (Sikh imitiation) which he does when he is grown up. Of course, he is supposed not to violate any essentials of being a Sikh after being imitiated ; and is not supposed to eat with those who have not been thus imitiated. On enquiring the number of villagers who had undergone the ceremony of Amrit Chakna, we found that almost all married adults among Jats, Kambos Kumhar, Tarkhans had received the Sikh imitiation It is done mostly before marriage, because marriage of persons not imitiated is considered invalid according to Sikh religious rules. Before performing the marriage, the priest conducting the marriage asks both the bridegroom and his bride if they have received Sikh imitiation or not. If one or both have not been imitiated, a solemn oath is taken by them before the Sikh Holy Book that they will do so at the earliest opportunity. We were told that although almost everybody received Amrit at sometime of his life, very few abided by all the rules prescribed for them. Trimming of beard was cited as a major evidence of breaking the rules.

Abstinence of tobacco and intoxicants is also enjoined upon all Sikhs after they have received Amrit. Particular stress is laid on abstinence from tobacco and its products. It was said that even the horse of Guru Gobind Singh refused to enter the field where tobacco had been grown. No Sikh farmer grows tobacco in his fields although it can fetch good money. None of the shops in Daleke sold cigarettes or 'bidis'. We did not come across a 'hookah' (pipe) or a man smoking 'bidis' or cigarettes. But we were told that some Mazhbis smoke cigarettes which they buy in the nearby town—Taran Taran.

However nobody smokes in public. On the other hand twelve persons belonging to different castes were habitual opium addicts and ate it daily in small quantities. Drinking of liquor and 'bhang' was, however, very common among all male adults.

Prayer

Sikh religion lays a great stress on prayer; and those—who have received Amrit are expected to recite prayers both early in the morning and in the evening. The form of prayer is the repetition of the name of God i e. Waheguru and chanting hymns in his praise. In the morning they should recite five prayers Japji, Asa-Di-War, Jap Anand, Chaupai and in the evening Rehras. They should recite Kirtan Sohela before they go to bed Among the male villagers only fifteen were found to be reciting their prayers regularly. They represented various castes—Jat, Tarkhan, Mazhbi, Kamboh and Nai. A large majority of them were landlords and said to have more free time than others. But all of them were not reciting all the prescribed prayers. Some of them were only reading Japji in the morning and Rehras in the evening. Among them one was a student of the near-by Sikh school at Taran Taran. The Mazhbis known to be saying their prayers regularly were employed in the army. One of the Brahmins also claimed that he read Japji in the morning besides worshipping an idol of Shiva at his house. Other villagers interviewed said that they repeated 'Waheguru' whenever they got a chance to do. Although the number of persons saying daily prayers is very small in the village but they pray Waheguru (god) before beginning anything e. g. sowing, reaping a harvest, building a house, going on a long voyage etc. Quite often especially by rich Jagirdars the Sant is called from the Gurudwara and all gathered join him when he leads the prescribed prayer (Ardasa). The Ardasa begins by propitating the God and all the Sikh Gurus and Heroes and ends with the asking of special favours from God in the successful completion of the task undertaken. On occasions of joy like marriage, birth of a son, cure from long disease, or success in examination or profession, Akhand Path a non-stop recitation of the Granth from the first page to the last in 48 hours, is conducted by a relay of persons. Saptahik path which is completed in seven days is also organised These paths are also conducted on occasions of death. In the beginning and at the conclusion of the recitation of the Holy Book, prayers joined by all assembled are held. Some villagers including children (we never saw more than 15 during our stay) join the Sant daily at the Gurdwara when he says his prayers, but on 'Sangrad' (first day of the Indian month) the number of persons who had come to join prayers

at the Gurdwara was about 60. The entire village population was present on the birthdays of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.

Concept of Waheguru (God.)

When asked to describe God, the Daleke villagers gave various answers. He is infinite and limitless and originator of the world. He is the biggest of deities and looks after everyone. He sends rains for sowing and sunshine to ripen them. He is also present everywhere. This concept fits well with the definition given by the Sikh Gurus showing that most of the villagers were conversant with the Sikh concept of God However two out of the fifty persons interviewed answered that they knew of the existence of God who is biggest of all but could not define him. Another two representing the Mazhbis denied the existence of any God. They argued that if there was a God who was the well-wisher of all, he should have saved them from the clutches of the rich and made them rich too. Both these informants were found to be in the forefront whenever Communist Party members came to the village for carrying on party propaganda, and were described as Communists by the villagers.

Sikh Gurus :—Gurus are the central figures of Sikhism. Even Gods is called 'Waheguru' (the Big Guru) Daleke villagers even swear in the name of Guru When one asks them whose Sikhs they are they answer that they are the Sikhs of the Guru. When asked to define Guru, the reply most often given was that 'he is one who is worshipped by all, teaches us good things and helps us in attaining salvation'. They also said that they call their school teachers, or teachers of some craft and sports also as Guru, but their real Gurus were only ten. Most of the villagers could not name all the ten Gurus, but all of them told us the names of the first, fifth and tenth i e. Guru-Nanak, Arjan and Govind Singh. The school children—both boys and girls showed more knowledge of the names of all the Gurus than the adults. They had been taught about them in their school. More than fifty percent persons interviewed declared that all the ten Gurus were equal in status. This was especially the view of educated Sikhs. About twenty percent of the interviewed persons wanted to place the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh on the top since it was he who created the Khalsa Panth and made one Sikh equal to one and a quarter lakh of other men. He gave definite proof of this power and strength of the Khalsa during his battle with Muslims. He also taught them to be brave and be prepared to die for the cause of their religion. About twelve percent would put Guru Nanak above others because he was the founder of Sikhism. Guru Arjan, the fifth

Guru was also sought to be higher than others in status by some of the informants because he had built the Golden Temple and a big tank at Taran Taran where Sikhs come from far and near to bathe on every Masya. They get together of Sikhs from far and near at Taran Taran Temple was said to inspire them to undertake collective tasks and be firm in their religious beliefs Guru Arjan is also praised for having compiled the Granth (Sikh Holy Book) which was given the status of the Guru by the tenth Guru before his death. It must however be added that because of his association with Taran Taran and nearby villages Guru Arjun is not only known and worshipped by Sikhs, but also by Hindus and Christians Calenders or framed pictures of Guru Nanak, Arjun and Gobind Singh are seen in practically all the houses in Daleke. They are conspicuous in the sitting rooms

All the Gurus are believed to have possessed supernatural powers, which were more and of a superior kind than those possessed by Hindu gods and Muslim faquis We shall relate a few such incidents concerning Guru Arjun as related to us by the Daleke villagers When Guru Arjun wanted to build a big tank and a temple in this area he went to the nearby village Kud, but the villagers of Kud refused to give him any land. He cursed them that they would always fight among themselves. His prophecy had come true and they have never made any progress because of internal fights Then he went to another village nearby and asked the Sikhs of 'Chal' gotra to donate 84 bighas of land They kept silent first, and later said that they were very poor people and did not get enough yield from their friends even to fill their bellies ; and so they could not give him any land. On hearing this the Guru said that their lands would always remain barren. Until now in this village area only one crop (Hadi) is sown and reaped every year The 'Sawani' crop whenever sown is unsuccessful.

Next the Guru made a request to the local Muslim ruler for giving him some land for this purpose. He agreed to do so on cash payment He was paid in gold Mohurs worth rupees one lakh and eighty four thousand rupees. A gurdwara has been built at the site where the Guru made this payment. He had tied his horse to four wooden pegs fixed in the earth. It is believed that those wooden pegs later developed into trees and exist even today. We saw four trees growing near the temple ourselves, where the Daleke villagers took us. Another story was related to us of Guru Arjan's divine powers and magnanimity. The payment of gold mohurs to the Muslim ruler was postponed for the next day because a great deal of mohurs had to be counted. The remaining gold mohurs were burried in the earth. Two

thieves kept on digging the earth for the whole night, but could not find any mohurs and in the meanwhile they were caught by the Sikhs accompanying the Guru It is believed that the disappearance of the gold Mohurs at night and their reappearance in the morning was due to the miraculous powers of the Guru. It is further said that the Guru instead of punishing the thieves gave them 10-15 gold mohurs each.

The water of the sacred tank attached to the Golden Temple is believed to have powers of curing leprosy. It is believed that a famous Hakim (physician) presented Guru Arjan with a small box of ointment for curing leprosy. The Guru threw it into the tank adjoining the temple. The Hakim got angry because his present had not accepted by the Guru and that his labours had been wasted. The Guru told him not to worry since his box of ointment would have been sufficient only for one leprosy patient but now all those who would take bath in the tank will be immune from it, and those suffering from leprosy will be cured.

Similar stories are related in connection with other Gurus. Guru Nanak is said to have provided food in the jungles like a magician when his companions felt hungry. He could also travel very fast from one place to another just by closing his eyes and wishing to be at a certain place. Another incident related was that at Hardwar he began to throw water of the Ganges towards the opposite side of Sun. On being questioned he replied that he was sending water to his fields. Others began to laugh at him for his foolishness in believing that water could reach his fields, 500 miles away. But he retorted that if water could not reach his fields, how could it reach their ancestors in heaven. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru is also believed to have possessed supernatural powers and all those who took the Sikh imitiation of sword were and are believed to have acquired strength equivalent to one hundred and twenty five thousand persons. It is also believed that the first five known as the Five Beloved were first beheaded in the tent and later the Guru by his supernatural powers infused new life into them. The educated persons said that the Guru had tied five goats in the tent which he killed one by one. But others resented this explanation and blamed the person who gave this explanation as one not having full faith in the Guru. Their Guru was most powerful and because of his supernatural powers was capable of doing everything including even infusion of life into the dead. Another incident related of Guru Gobind Singh is that of his having infused life into the dead husband of a devotee woman. This has been published in the form

of Kissa (stories) by a local bard and was available at most of the shops selling pamphlets and books at the various fairs held in the area. It is said that Daya Kaur and her husband Beant Singh desired to come to Taran Taran on Masya from Jamrod (N W. F P). They hired a horse of Rehmat Pathan to carry their luggage. Rehmat Pathan killed Beant Singh when he was resting in a jungle and wanted to run away with his wife Daya Kaur and their luggage. Daya Kaur refused to accompany him and prayed to Guru Gobind Singh to come to her rescue. It is significant that her prayers to her tenth Guru include references to Draupdi's rescue from insult by Lord Krishna besides references to Sikh Gurus. There is an element of modernization also in the Kissa as related by the bard. He says, 'As soon as the Guru received the telegram of his devotee (which he must have done in heaven) he at once came to her rescue riding his white horse'. He not only killed Rehmat Pathan but also infused life into the murdered husband of Daya Kaur. All this is said to have happened in recent times and reported in the Punjab Gazette. This incident is also cited as the reward of complete faith in their Guru. It is sung by local bards 'Dhadhis' in the gurdwaras on festivals. Many other incidents of the Guru having fulfilled the desires of his devoted Sikhs are related by the villagers.

Guru Granth :—It is believed that the tenth Guru nominated the Granth as his successor and it is called Guru Granth by the Sikhs. It contains mainly the writings of the first five Gurus and a verse of the ninth Guru as well as the writings of some Muslim saints like Kabir and Farid and Hindu bhagats like Namdev, Dhanna and Surdas. Most of the Daleke villagers believe that the Granth has life and feels the heat of summer and cold of winter like any other living person. It is wrapped in cotton clothes in summer and in warm clothes in winter. Some persons were seen fanning the Granth in summer. Utmost respect is paid to it by all. Nobody will touch the book unless he has taken a bath and washed himself, and no one sits bare-headed or with shoes on before it. Women do not touch the Granth during their menstruation period. They may however enter the gurdwara during those days. When the Granth is carried from the gurdwara to somedody's house, one man walks barefoot infront and sprinkles water on the way from a container to make the place clean. The Granth placed on a cot is carried on the head of another bare-footed person A third person carries a chor in his hand and fans it over the Holy Book. People if sitting stand and bow and fold their hands as a mark of respect to the Guru. The Granth is opened on a cot which has three small pillows two on sides and one in front.

Kerchiefs of $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ yards size are spread over the Granth. They are usually white in colour and made of Khadi, but coloured ones and made of silk were also found in the Daleke gurdwara. These kerchiefs known as 'Rumala' are offered to the Granth after every Akhand or Saptahik path. They are also offered on occassions of birth, marriage and death. The quality of cloth varries with the status of the family.

When the Granth is opened for the first time in the morning, the first stanza on the left page is read by the granthi. This is considered to signify the hukam i.e. order of the Guru. The verse read in the early morning is considered as a forecast also for the day by many. In the Golden Temple at Amritsar and Taran Taran, the first two lines of the stanza read when the Granth was opened in the morning are written on a specially erected board at the entrance of the gurdwaras for the benefit of those who come later during the day. The same practice i e reading of hukam is resorted to when somebody comes to the gurdwara with a problem-personal or collective e.g. cure of an old disease, bad crop etc. If the verse read is good, it signifies that the wish of the person will be fulfilled and if the remarks in the verse are adverse then the person is well advised either to drop his adventure or propitiate the Guru by offering money for the common kitchen etc.

During the evening 'Rehras'—a special Sikh evening prayer is recited and then the Granth is closed and wrapped in cloth ; the pillows are removed to give it more comfort. A white sheet covers the book on the cot in summer, but in winter a small quilt is also spread over the Granth to save it from cold. To tell a villager that it is a book and has no life is only asking for trouble. He is infuriated and ready to fight a person who calls his Granth only a book. He begins to relate many incidents showing that his Guru Granth is a living object. Most of these are on the pattern that he wanted something and went to pray for it before the Holy Book. After he had prayed and asked the Granthi to read from the Holy Book, the verse which he read answered his prayers and gave correct advice to him. Once an educated person went to a Sikh Sant and told him that he respected the Granth only as a book. The Sikh Sant asked the Granth to be closed and asked all assembled to recite 'Waheguru'. It is claimed that 'Waheguru' was also heard being uttered by the Granth by all those assembled. Some persons were seen in Daleke and Taran Taran pressing the legs of the cot on which the Granth had been opened. This is similar to pressing the legs of guests, Rajas and Kings as a matter of respect. The Sikhs

refer to their Guru as King of Kings. That this practice is wide-spread among Sikhs is evident from the fact that the instructions issued by the Sikh Ceremonies and Customs sub-committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee has made a special mention of it and has asked Sikhs not to continue such practices which were Unsikh-like. The Holy Book in Taran Taran and Amritsar Golden Temple is taken in a palanquin from the main temple to the 'Bed-room' and put to sleep with an accompaniment of singing hymns and lulabies. This process is not so elaborate in the Daleke gurdwara, where after the evening prayers the Granth is closed and set to rest for night.

The concept of villagers of the Granth has been discussed in detail to show that although Sikhism forbids idol-worship, and Sikhs do not worship any stone idol or pictures, their treatment and worship of their Holy Book is almost similar to that of Vaishnavites towards Vishnu. It should, however, be mentioned that educated person in Daleke like the Sarpanch, G. Singh etc consider these practices against the Sikh religion and attribute them to ignorance of the people They say that obeisance before the Holy Book is only to show one's respect to something superior to oneself as one would respect a King or another book. They further assert that the Holy Book being sacred is similar to the Muslim's Koran. But their holy book means much more to them than Koran to Muslims. It is the direct successor of their Guru-a Guru itself and they go to it for advice and guidance in all activities. The Sarpanch is a regular subscriber to three religious magazines published by the Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee and Chief Khalsa Dewan and his magazines are shared by most of the educated young people in the village.

Gurdwara :—Gurdwara means the thresh-hold (door) of the Guru and wherever Sikh gurus have gone and stayed for even an hour, a gurdwara has been built in their honour. Some of them are big while others are small. During the Sikh rule, Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated 'Jagirs' to each historic temple ; and also gave a great deal of money to construct the big Sikh temples at Amritsar, Taran Taran, Hazur Sahib (Nanded) and Nanakan Sahib. The Jagirdars and Sardars also gave donations to the small gurdwaras located in their jurisdiction. The Gurdwara in Daleke is located in the centre of the village near a well. There is a large empty square in front of it where the villagers sit and chat. The Gurdwara building consists of two rooms—a big hall and a small room adjacent to it. The Granth is kept in the small room, while the hall is used for the village school. However, on festival days the Granth is carried into the

big hall. This gurdwara was built only thirty years ago before which there was only a 'Katcha' room. Adjacent to the gurdwara was a mosque and the Muslims were disturbed by the music played in the gurdwara. The Sikh jagirdars asked the Muslims to transfer their mosque to another site for which land was donated by one of them. A committee of Sikh residents of Daleke was formed to supervise the construction of the new gurdwara. They collected money from each house in the village according to its status ; and all helped in the construction work. The committee members were drawn from Jat, Kamboh and Tarkhan castes. The villagers emphasized that the construction of the gurdwara was completed with the co-operation of all and without any quarrel.

A granthi was appointed on the completion of the gurdwara to look after it. He gets the entire produce of 5–6 bighas of land donated to the gurdwara. He also gets from each land-owning family twenty seers of grain at each harvest. He keeps a cow for which he gets free fodder. He is called to various houses to recite Akhand and Saptahik paths and besides meals gets Rs. 5–7 on each such occasions. He also collects a chapati (wheat cake) or two with some dal or vegetables from each house every day. The chapatis collected daily and the food-grain given to him at each crop are more than his personal needs and he distributes food to the poor villagers or travellers who happen to be near the gurdwara at meal time. He also organises community meals at the gurdwara on Masya and birthday anniversaries of Guru Nanak and Gobind. The Daleke villagers also set up a 'shabil' on the road side to serve sweet water to passers-by on Guru Arjan's martyrdom aniversary. Money and grains are collected from each family in the village for this purpose.

The present granthi, Waryam Singh, is a middle-aged person and is well-versed with the Sikh rites and ceremonies. He stayed with an Udasi Saint for a number of years after running away from his home in childhood. The Udasi saint taught him the Sikh scriptures as well as Vedanta. He also studied at the Shahid Sikh Missionary College. He is respected by all in the village and is given a place of honour to sit but still he is under the control of the managing committee and cannot do anything against their wishes. During our stay in the village the granthi known as Sant became angry with the committee members and left the village. The Sarpanch and other members of the committee were unperturbed, although some villagers suggested to them that they should go to the village where the Sant had gone and bring him back. The Sarpanch and others refused to go and said that they would manage the gurdwara without

him. The Granth was opened in the morning and closed in the evening by either one of the members of the committee or one of the members of the singing party. After four days of his leaving the village the Sant came back on his own and started doing his work. The Sarpanch remarked that he could never find life better in any other village. The Sant himself was less communicative It shows that although the Sant fulfils the role of a priest similar to that of a Brahmin and goes on occasion of joy—birth, initiation, marriage, and sorrow death to the house of the villagers to conduct proper ceremonies ; but his stay in village depends upon the goodwill of the villagers, one of whom performs the ceremonies in his absence. Moreover, he cannot demand anything by right of his birth as a Brahman can do. He is in the true sense a "keeper' and one who can read the granth. The granthi of the village is a Cheemba (washerman) by caste.

Prayers are said both in the morning and evening by the Granthi everyday. About 5-10 persons attended these prayers ; many others pay their respect by bowing their heads when they happen to pass through the Sath (meeting place). Large audiences were found to be present on Sangrad (the first day of each Bikrami month) when the granthi reads the special verse of that particular month from 'Barah Maha' (Twelve Months) written in the Granth. Special hymns-Asa-Di-War are sung by a group of musicians and they are joined at times by the whole congregation. The musicians are a Jat agriculturist, a carpenter, a Mazhbi and the granthi in their every day life. Special parshad prepared from equal quantities of flour, sugar and ghee (clarified butter) is distributed after having been sanctified with a sword. Almost the entire village turns out on Guru Gobind Singh's birthday anniversary. The gurdwara is decorated with buntings and festoons by the young people, especially school children. Akhand or Saptahik paths are conducted, and on the anniversary day hymns are sung by the village musicians from the early morning One of the educated or elderly persons gives a short lecture on the life and teachings of the Guru. Children both boys and girls recite poems or sing hymns in the praise of the guru, and are distributed prizes. Other occasions when there is a sizable attendance is when a Sikh saint or a famous ragi (musician) is staying at the gurdwara and giving sermons or singing hymns. Equally largely attended meetings were noticed when an Akali worker came to address the villagers. They usually address meetings after the morning prayers (Asa-Di.War) has been sung by the musicians ; but before 'hukam' has been read from the Granth and distribution

of the parshad. The spiritual meeting is transformed into a social or a political meeting. Matters relating to the improvement of the village streets or some village representation to the government of *Hindi Agitation or Panjabi Suba are discussed.*

After the prayers the main hall is used as a school. Before the opening of the government school in the village (which is also housed in the gurdwara) the granthi used to teach Panjabi to the village children.

Gurdwara seems to be the nerve centre of the village life. They go there not only to satisfy their spiritual needs, but also social, educational and political requirements. On occasions of marriage barats (marriage parties) are housed in the gurdwara, whenever the Block Development officer or a Panchayat officer wants to meet the villagers, they collect in the gurdwara hall or in front of it. The speaker of the Panjab Legislative Assembly who was elected from the local constituency also addressed the villagers in-front of the gurdwara.

Sikh Heroes

Besides the gurdwaras built in the honour of the Gurus, Gurdwaras have also been constructed in honour of Sikh heroes who have either died fighting against Mughals or were saints. The most wel-known Sikh heroes in Daleke are Baba Dip Singh and Mai Bhago. Both of them came from the nearby villages. Baba Dip Singh is said to have been a very strong man as well as a great saint. His double-edged sword is claimed by the villagers to weigh two maunds. When the Amritsar Golden Temple was occupied by agents of the Muslim rulers of Lahore, he took an oath not to stop fighting until he reached the Golden Temple and cleared it of the miscreants. It is claimed that with only a handful of men he broke through the Mughal army but his head was severed from his body when he was still 5 miles away from Amritsar. He lifted his head on his left palm and continued fighting with the right hand and kept advancing towards Amritsar. The Muslim army took to their heels when they saw a head-less body fighting and walking. A small gurdwara has been constructed on the road-side at the site where his head was cut ; and all buses plying between Taran Taran and Amritsar halt there for a minute. The passangers offer a pice or two at the roadside shrine. When Baba Dip Singh reached the outskirts of Amritsar he was so severely wounded that he could not walk any further. So he fell down, but before doing so he threw his head into the corridors of the Golden Temple. A five storeyed gurdwara has been constructed at the site where his

body fell, as well as a one-roomed gurdwara in the corridors around the Holy Tank of the Golden Temple Out of respect to Baba Dip Singh people avoid walking over the place where his head had fallen. Many Daleke villagers had given 'Chaukis' at the shrine of Baba Dip Singh and also kept his pictures showing head on the left palm in their houses. Chaukis i e. going for forty days daily to his shrine for fulfilment of certain wishes like son, status, cure from a disease etc. is performed by Sikhs from all over India.

Mai Bhago is famous for having put the Majha Sikhs to shame for having deserted their Guru, and led them and other women to battle. She also died fighting in the battle, and a big gurdwara has now been constructed at Muktsar at the site. Besides other heroes there is also a local hero-Baba Daya Singh. He is said to have built the pucca fortress in the village and was a great warrior in the army of the'Sardars of the Bhangi Misal. After the defeat of the Bhangi Sardars, he left for Ambala because he did not like to work for Maharaja Ranjit Singh the conqueror. A family in the village still has the cord of his trousers. If water in which it has been stirred is drunk by a childless woman, she is believed to beget a child in the near future.

RITES DE PASSAGE also give an indication of the religious beliefs of the people Most of the ceremonies connected with birth, initiation, marriage and death remain the same as among local Hindus, but Sikh ceremonies have been syncretized with the previous beliefs of the people. A mojor decline has been in the role of Brahman. He is not the central figure of all these ceremonies and has been replaced by the Sikh granthi. Instead of writing "Om" on the tongue of the newborn with honey, 'Ekonkar' (God is one) is written and the newborn child is given the amrit (nectar) of sword by the granthi. The custom of giving sugar or brown sugar to the newborn by a good person in the village is still prevalent. It is hoped that the child will be like the one who gave him his first sweet. The Naming Ceremoney is also performed either at home or in the gurdwara. The Granthi reads a verse from tne Granth and the first letter of the first word should be the first letter of the name of the child. The initiation is entirely different from that of the Sacred Thread ceremony of the Hindus. Most of the Sikh grown-up boys and girls in Daleke have received imitiation of the sword either in the Taran Taran or Amritsar Golden Temple. Once when there were a number of persons wanting to receive 'Amrit' a party of five 'pyaras' (beloved) were sent to Daleke by the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar. Since 1921 marriages have been

performed according to the Sikh rites, but there were two who had been married around the fire by a Brahman. One of them said that he was not getting a wife, and the father of his wife insisted that he should marry in accordance with the 'Sanatani' rites. Those assembled there began to ridicule him, but he retorted 'After all I was married according to some rites, what about these who just bring some woman from somewhere ?'

All widow or remarriages are performed in a simple manner. The couple goes to the gurdwara, and the man puts a head-covered on his fiancee i e. 'Chadar Pana' in the presence of the granthi, relatives and friends. 'Chadar Pana' implies taking responsibility for the upkeep and other needs of the woman. Some clothes and ornaments may be given to the woman by her prospective husband. Her parents may also give some dowry. Those accompanying the bridegroom are later fed at the house of the bride's parents.

At death the corpse is cremated. When a person is dying he is removed to the floor if he was lying on a cot. This is against the principles laid down in the rules of conduct and the customs of Sikhs prepared by a sub-committee of Sikh cholars set-up by the Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee. We did not come across a single case of a person dying on a cot. The person is given a bath by the elderly persons in the family and given a clean set of clothes. It is particularly noticed that he carries all the five k's of Sikhism e g Kara, Kacha, Kirpan, Kesh, and Kangha. The corpse is carried on a wooden bier by the relatives and friends to the cremation ground which is used by all the castes. The granthi or any other person who can read, recites the Sikh prayer. 'Sulkhmani' (Pealm of Peace) All assembled pray to God to bestow peace on the departed soul and perseverence on the survivors. The eldest son lights the fire first and also breaks the skull with a bamboo The ashes are gathered on the fourth day and bones are thrown in the nearby canal or pond. Some of the villagers throw them in a canal near Goidwal (7 miles away from Daleke) where a Sikh temple is situated. During floods and other times of peril dead bodies are not cremated but just thrown in water. Those living in extreme poverty and not being able to afford money for fire-wood required for cremation also throw them in canals or rivers. 'Mazhbis' who are economically the poorest instead bury their dead as their ancestors used to do [4] They want to cremate them like other Sikhs but did not always have enough money Hence only adults are cremated. Children and adolescents are usually buried in the nearby field. After the fourth day 'Saptahik Path' of the Sikh Holy Book is started. The whole biradari gets together on the tenth day, listens to the 'Kirtan' and joins in prayers On the death of a father, the eldest son is given a turban to tie in the congregation signifying his ascent to the headship. Clothes and utensils bearing the name of the dead person are given in charity to the gurdwara. One of the rich jagirdars has paid for fixing a marble slab in the carridors of the Taran Taran Temple and has his name engraved on it. In big gurdwaras at Taran Taran and

4. Makbza a-Panjab

Amritsar musicians specializing in singing hymns from Sikh scriptures called 'Ragis' are employed The Sikh gurus especially Gobind Singh encouraged their followers to sing their hymns themselves and be independent of the professional musicians. A few villagers in Daleke have learnt to play on harmonium and dholak (drum) and sing on various occasions as well as lead the community singing. One of them is a Jat former, while the others include a carpenter, a Mazhbi and the granthi Ten days mourning in contrast to thirteen days among Hindus is common among Sikhs. No meat is eaten or wine drunk during the mourning days and women keep weeping from 10 A. M. to about 6 P. M After a year on the day a person had died clothes are given to a needy Sikh. Many continue to do so every year.

Life After Death.

Most of the Daleke villagers interviewed believed in life after death and some of them wished to attain 'mukti' (salvation) A 'Baoli' (big well) is attached to a Sikh temple in Goindwal. It can be approached by 84 steps dug into the earth. It is believed that if a person recites the Sikh prayer Japji at each step and takes a dip in the baoli every time at a stretch, he can achieve mukti, and will not have to come to this world again A few from Daleke had attempted to do so, but no body has been successful as they had to give up because of exhaustion.

Sikh Places of Pilgrimage

Four 'takhats' (thrones) in Amritsar, Anandpur (birth place of the Khalsa, Patna (birth place of Guru Gobind Singh) and Hazur Sahib (the place where Guru Gobind Singh was cremated) are considered to be the four places of pilgrimage for Sikhs. Almost all Daleke villagers have visited the Golden Temple in Amritsar and taken a dip in the sacred tank, especially on Diwali and Baisakhi as well as birthday anniversaries of Guru Ram Das (the fifth Guru) and Guru Gobind Singh. Amritsar's Golden Temple called Darbar Sahib (Guru's court) and Hari Mandir is the Mecca of the Sikhs. The Daleke villagers said that the water in the tank surrounding the temple has great healing powers, and even crows become swans if they take a dip in it. According to a prevalent legend a leper when seeing crows transforming themselves into swans himself took a dip and became hale and healthy. It is believed that 'amrit' (nectar) was poured into this tank three times first by Lord Vishnu himself and then by Lava and Kush (sons of Ram & Sita), and latest by the Guru himself. It was further stated by another informant that all the thirty crores deotas (gods) helped in the construction of this temple. The tank has been cleaned twice and all Sikhs—whether princes or peasants have taken part in cleaning the tank. S Singh, of Daleke remembered having participated in the Kar Seva (big service) twenty years ago in Amritsar. There is a great deal of stress on service in the Sikh religion and the visitors to the Golden Temple Amritsar or other gurdwaras not only contribute money, towards the construction of new building but work with their own hands and help

to carry bricks or mortar on their heads. Many clean utensils in the kitchen attached to the gurdwara or keep a watch over the shoes of the visitors to the temple.

There is also a Guru's Kashi (Benares) in Ferozepur district, which is considered more sacred by Sikhs than Benares. Although Sikhs have their own places of pilgrimage and the Gurus had discouraged visits to Hindu places of pilgrimage some Sikhs have been seen in the temples of Gaya, Benares and Hardwar. Only 2-3 persons from Daleke have been to Benares or Hardwar and they are the ones who have served in the army. They asserted that they had gone there just to visit the temple as they happened to be in the vicinity. They claimed that Sikh places of pilgrimage were most sacred to them. This statement is in tune with the unanimous answer given by our fifty informants that they considered Sikhism to be superior to all other religions. Probably the following anecdote related to us by one of the villager sums up the religious belief of Daleke villagers— Once a Sikh was crossing a river on a boat along with others. When the boat reached in the mid-stream, it began to wobble ; and there was danger of its being overturned. Every one in the boat began to pray to his god and make promises of offerings. The Sikh traveller also prayed to the local deity of his village, and later Hanuman and made promises of an offering of five pice to each. The others asked him why he was not invoking his Guru. He said that 'his Guru was too big for such small matters, and he did not want to disturb him'.

A Sikh villager in Daleke besides believing in the Sikh religious practices also retains his faith in ancestral spirits, Muslim faqirs and Hindu devis although they are given a place of secondary importance. Considering the degree of belief in Sikhism of various castes in Daleke, we find that the Jats (economically and numerically dominant caste) are the staunchest Sikhs. Kambohs belonging to an other farmer caste and Tarkhans (carpenter) also believe equally strongly in Sikh beliefs and practices. The Kumhars (erstwhile potters) indulging in trade have much faith in Devis, while Mazhbis continue to worship their deity Valmiki along with the Sikh gurus. It can be said that the castes depending for their livelihood on the farmers consider it advantageous to adopt the religion of their masters. The Tarkhan, Kumhar or other artisan castes can always find work elsewhere if they do not like their masters ; but the landless laborers to which class most of the Mazhbis belong are entirely dependent on the farmers for their work. It is worth noting that though Muslim black-smiths were working in Daleke, almost all the Mazhbis are Sikhs. The religion of the tenant caste is usually the same as that of

the landlords. Infact, one of the Mazhbis remarked, "We have no religion. If a Muslim gives us a job and a bread we eat it and become Muslims ; and if a Sikh gives us bread, we become Sikhs. Our religion is bread." The hired laborer gets his daily food from his land-lord's house, and if their religions are different it would be difficult for him to eat that food. It is significant to note that even the purohits of the Maharaja had become Sikhs during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh In fact, the European generals of his army also kept long hair and beards as well as abstained from smoking. Many Brahmin-purohits at Gaya, Puri and Hardwar who cater for Panjabi pilgrims keep long hair and beards even today. Economic advantages of belonging to the same religion as that of one's master's, landlord's, king's or jajman's have certainly been one of the major reasons of the adoption of a new religion. However, it is not the only reason, and various other reasons were cited by the Mazhbis of Daleke—many of whom are very staunch Sikhs. Even the word-Mazhbi means the 'devoted'. Many Mazhbis especially those who serve in the Indian Army say their prayer and go to the gurdwara regularly. Some of them even said that permission to enter gurdwara and eat with all others in the Guru's Kitchen are distinct advantages of being Sikhs. Their social status is also raised if not in their own village, atleast outside the village ; where they are considered at par with other Sikhs. "You are always addressed as a Sardar outside the village," added another.

NOTES

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1	Guru Nanak,	1469—1539	6	Guru Har Govind,	1595—1644
2.	Guru Angad,	1504—1552	7.	Guru Har Rai,	1630—1661
3.	Guru Amar Das,	1479—1574	8.	Guru Har Keskar,	1656—1664
4.	Guru Ram Das,	1534—1581	9.	Guru Teg Bahadur,	1621—1675
5.	Guru Arjan,	1563—1606	10.	Guru Gobind Singh,	1666—1708

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RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE SANSIS OF PUNJAB

Sher Singh "Sher"

The Sansi tribe is one of the most prominent ex criminal tribes of Northern India mostly found in Punjab. They derive the name of their ancestor Sansmal or Sansi who was the 13th in descent from their community from Bhatti, a famous Rajput of Rajputana. The Bhatti Rajputs are descendants of Yadu Rajputs of Lunar dynasty (Chander Vansi) from which the Lord Krishna of Mathura was descended. One of the clans of the Bhatti Rajputs was known as Sansi whose members along with other Rajput tribes were expelled from Rajpuatna by the invasion of Alla-u-din Khilji in the end of the 13th century. Being destitute and dispossessed of their home-land they kept wandering from place to place for centuries together, leading a pastoral and predatory life which is inevitable for man under such circumstances, till they were put under the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 by the British rulers. The sansi tribe is proud of giving birth to the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in general the glory of India and in particular of the Sikhs. The total population of the Sansis is 100,000 in India, and more than half live in the Punjab alone.

Like their other aspects of life, the religious tendencies of the Sansis have also undergone several changes and particularly in the past 50 years. In the Punjab the religious changes of this community are remarkable after the partition of this land of five rivers. Previously the Sansis, like many other wandering tribes, had a form of Hindu religion though it was primitive and crude in form. In their every day life, we find Hindu rites and customs, superstitions, ordeals, oaths and omens. So it goes without saying that in the past the bulk of the Sansi population was Hindu and only a negligible number of this community professed Sikh religion as is clear from the perusal of the census reports of the Punjab. In 1881 there were only 401 Sikh Sansis (1·87 per cent of the total population, 21309), in the whole province. 40 years after, in 1921, instead of increasing, the Sikh Sansis were only 98 in the province (0·37 per cent of the total population, 29272), but in 1931 that number rose to 2469 (7·43 per cent of their total population, 33228). From 1931 onward, the Sansis began to embrace Sikhism in more and more numbers and Sardar Hari Singh, the then Deputy Commissioner of the Criminal Tribes of Punjab played a great role in persuading thousands of persons of this ethnic group to become Sikh, and he succeeded in doing it.

After 1941 every community tried to take the backward classes into its fold keeping in view the need and importance of votes in democratic India. More concessions were earmarked for the uplift of these people, but the condition of their being Hindu was imposed on them, which put an obstacle in the way of these people to embrace Sikhism as they could not avail themselves of the advantages reserved for the uplift of the neglected people without being Hindus. Hence this was rather the inhibiting factor in the choice of their religious life.

The partition of India gave a clear expression to the religious tendencies of these people. West Punjab, having 16 districts, went to West Pakistan and thirteen districts came to East Punjab, India. All the Hindus and the Sikhs of West Punjab, migrated to India and Muslims of East Punjab migrated to West Pakistan Hundreds of Sansi families of West Punjab migrated to India. All the Sansis who had gone with their Sikh jajmans, to the newly settled colonies and villages of Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan and Sargodha returned to India along with their Sikh patrons. On the other hand there was not even a single Sansi family of East Punjab and Punjab states which migrated to Pakistan. The Sansis of West Punjab rapidly followed the ways of Islam, after the partition of the Punjab in 1947, under the political circumstances. I went to West Punjab in 1952, in connection with the collection of data of this research work. At Sacha Sauda (district Sheikhupura), many Sansis came to see me and I noted that the Sansis of the villages of Ajanianwala, Khanqah Dogran, Miyan Ali, Kakkar, Nanak Kot, Sarwai, Kot Nakka, Gajiana, Awan, Baddoratta and those of hundreds of other villages of West Punjab had embraced Islam though they were Hindu upto 1947, the year in which the Punjab was partitioned.

It may be mentioned that this religious ramification of the Sansis is not typical to them only, but it is also present in the case of Sikh and Hindu Jats of the Punjab. In the West Punjab since centuries, the Virk, the Varaich, the Goraya, the Sandhu, the Bajwa, the Ghuman, the Man, the Cheema and many other castes of the Jats were Sikh as well as Muslim, and sometimes they were found living in the same village. After partition, the Sikh Jats of these castes came to India whereas their Mohammadan caste-brothers are now living in the West Punjab.

After the partition of the province the census was taken in 1951 but no caste wise figures were recorded. At present the Sansis are found to be religiously divided into following groups :—

1. Most of the Sansis are Hindu in the Punjab (India), tending to observe Hinduism in its proper ritual, ceremonial and formal ways.

2. Some of the Sansis are yet unchanged in their religious customs and beliefs and they worship their ancestral god Raja Sansmal and other ancestors.

3. In the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Ambala and former Sikh States mostly the Sansis are full-fledged Sikhs.

Besides the Sikh Sansis of East Punjab, 500 Sikh Sansis have settled at Delhi, after their migration from different districts of West Punjab. They are living in the colonies of Kasturba Nagar, Moti Nagar and Kingsway Camp, Delhi. At Kasturba Nagar they have built a Gurdwara in which Sardar Nihal Singh, a member of this community is working as a Granthi. During my tours and enquiries I saw about 5000 well settled Sikh Sansis in different parts of Punjab.

Now another question arises about the religious tendencies of the Sansis of the Punjab. The question is, "Why have thousands of the Sansis embraced Sikhism today, whereas there were only 98 Sikh Sansis in 1921 according to the record of the census report of 1921 ?" Before answering this question it is necessary to clarify that the Sikh Sansis are in no way connected with the Mazhabis. It was noticed by Ibbetson in the census report of 1881 and was again affirmed by Rose in clearcut words, "The Sikh Sansis wear the Kes, but do not enrol themselves among the Mazhabis"[1]. But on the other hand we read about the Mazahbis, "Mazahbi means nothing more than a member of scavenger class converted to Sikhism"[2].

It has already been mentioned that according to the Constitution of India only the Hindu backward classes were entitled to reserved concessions. After partition the Sikhs began an organised struggle for getting equal rights for all the down trodden of whatever religion they may be. The idea was that in a secular and democratic state special concessions should be given to all who deserve on the basis of poverty, blood and backwardness and not on the ground of their belief or religion. After a great deal of discussion an amendment was made in the Constitution of India. Before any amendment was made the President of India declared and it was published in the Gazetteer of India, Ministry of Law, New Delhi, the 10th August, 1950. The order is known as "THE CONSTITUTION (Scheduled Castes) order 1950." In its paragraph 2, we read, "Notwithstanding

anything contained with paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste." So according to this declaration of the President, it was necessary for the castes concerned to belong to Hinduism in order to get reserved rights and privileges

The Sikhs demanded the reserved rights for the Sikh depressed classes like the Hindu depressed classes, but the Congress Government refused on the basis of the para, "That would have been logical position because strictly speaking untouchability being peculiar feature of Hinduism only, no community belonging to any other separate religion could legitimately claim the concessions reserved for the Untouchables of the Hindu Community"[3].

The Sikh leaders put up a note to the Indian Government, "For purpose of this questionnaire the word 'HINDU' includes Sikh, Jains, etc." On this plea, the backward classes commission concluded, "It is our view that the Sikhs constitute an integral part of the broader Hindu relgion Racially, culturally, traditionally, Sikhs are an integral part of Hindu fold like Arya Samajists, Brahmu Samajists, the Indian Buddhists and Jains. Although in theory the Sikhs do not subscribe to caste system, in actual practice they cling to many of the Hindu traditions and practices—including that of untouchability. There are cases where Sikhs are found to marry with no Sikhs of the same caste. We recommend therefore, that those communities or groups who are treated as Untouchables among the Sikhs should be included in the list of the scheduled "castes"[4].

As a result, the President of India amended the constitution (Scheduled Castes) order 1950, "Provided that every member of the Ramdasi, Kabir Panthi, Mazahabi, or Sikligar caste resident in Punjab or Patiala and East Punjab states Union should in relation to that state be deemed to be a member of the scheduled castes whether he professes the Hindu or the Sikh religion".

Inspite of this amendment the full problem of the Sikhs was not solved as only four Sikh depressed castes were given the reserved rights where-as the demand of the Sikhs was for all the Sikh depressed classes In 1953, after a great struggle all the Sikh scheduled castes were given all the reserved rights which were available to Hindu scheduled castes and it is a notable fact in the history of this struggle of the Sikh community that the struggle was begun from the case of a Sansi young man who was exceptionally highly qualified. He was asked to write himself a Hindu for getting reserved rights. He suffered and sacrificed a lot but did not budge an inch from his Sikh

faith, just for some advantages which could have fetched him a great career in Government Service or in political life.

Now the former condition referred to above has been waived and this is why thousands of Sansis have become Sikh in the East Punjab. Sikhism suits them more than Hinduism, as in its doctrine Sikhism is a religion of casteless society which particularly attracts the people who have been victimised by the Hindu caste system Even socio-economically, Sikhism suits them more in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Patiala, Sangrur, Fatehgarh, Bhatinda etc. which are predominantly populated by the Sikhs. The present religious tendency of the Sansis of the Punjab clearly indicates that their devotion to Sikhism is increasing day by day. At present some Sikh Sansis have great respect among the Sikhs. Sant Sohan Singh of the district of Amritsar belongs to this community. He is highly respected by all the Sikhs of Mahja. Some Sikh Sansis have been employed by the Sharomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, as sewadars, priests and missionaries. Sardar Nirmal Singh who comes of the Sansi community is working as an incharge of the Sikh Dharam Parchar centre, Patiala.

The Sansis of the districts of Karnal, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hissar and hilly tracts of the East Punjab are Hindu. I have seen some Hindu Sansis who have renounced the world as ascetics or Sadhus and Swami Bawa Ditta is most respected of them.

Now I will describe their superstitions, omens, worship and festivals which constitute an integral part of the religious beliefs and practices of a community.

SUPERSTITIONS

Most men, primitive or modern, barbarian or civilized, black or white, rich or poor, live in two worlds. There is the actual material world in which a tree to one is a tree to the other and a sea to one is the sea to the other. Fire, heat, cold, darkness and sunshine have the same meaning to, and effect on all of them. But besides this there is another world. This world is not the same for all. The mental world of one is entirely different from the mental world of the other. The mind of primitive man is full of hobgoblins, ghosts, *badawas*, *churels*, and *Jins* which a rational and modern man does not accept. Religion and superstitions are allied to a great extent, but superstition is a false and unfounded belief in super-natural agencies. A modern man believes that even though such agencies exist, they cannot do any harm to him because they are under the sway of a

supreme power in which he believes and calls God. So a true believer or a free thinker of modern times ignores belief in supernatural agencies, while a superstitious person trembles and stands in awe and fear. To a common Sansi all the animate and inanimate things may be the abode of spirits of one sort or another. The Sansis believe that the spirits may be helpful and friendly, but generally they are inimical to men and give them many kinds of troubles. I have discussed the spirit world of Sansis with many and especially with their chelas or the tribal saints who control spirits and scare them away. They describe the following types of Spirits which usually interfere with their life.

1. **Churel or Balaa** · A Churel is the spirit of a woman who has died in a great distress, agony and anguish of child birth. The spirit of a churel is thought to be the most appalling of all the bad spirits. She has a very grisly appearance and if one looks at her feet they are turned backwards. Her front is very beautiful and bewitching, but her back is very ugly, black and putrid. She often seduces men and then does a great harm to them. Some of the tribes rip open the womb of a pregnant woman and take out the foetus so that the dead mother may not become a churel. According to Crook[5], some tribes bury the dead mother and the foetus on the opposite sides of a stream, as they believe that the spirits cannot cross water. But the Sansis do not take the foetus out of the mother's womb.

2. **Jin.** According to most of the sorcerers, the Jin is a spirit of a Mohamedan. A Jin can assume many forms and he particularly attacks a beautiful and unmarried girl for amorous enjoyment. The Sansis have also a great fear of a Jin.

3. **Kabbis** This is thought to be a very dangerous demon It has a very dreadful appearance, having long nails and long feet. The nails are used to make deep cuts in the body of the victim and if the victim resists then it pierces, with its long teeth, the body of its prey and drains out the blood. A Kabbis is exceedingly fond of sucking human blood.

4. **Bhoot or Bhootna.** It is believed that a man who dies of an accidental or sudden death of a dreaded disease is sure to become *a Bhoot* A *Bhoot* is always the spirit of a male A *Bhoot* can also assume many shapes, but generally it is invisible and enters the body, persons and house, like wind and air. A *Bhoot*, as a rule, does not give any trouble to his own family but helps it. It opposes and attacks the family of the rivals, or those who tease and coerce him. A Bhoot's general abode is considered to be the cremation ground or the grave yard.

5. Pret. *The spirit of* a crippled, lame, deformed, mentally defective and deranged person, becomes a *pret.* The spirit of a deformed woman becomes a pretni. The prets and pretnis are not very harmful spirits. They are timid and pitiable. They themselves are afraid of many spirits of the jungle and it is believed that at night, out of fear, these spirits come near human habitation. Some magicians say that the *prets* should be pitied and they should be given food. They also attack on being teased.

6 Dev Danoon. A *Danoon* is the spirit of a giant or a monster. It is the most powerful of all the spirits. It has a very colossal size. A Danoon lives in tall trees, in mountains, in caves, and in thickets of the jungles. A Dev Danoon is believed to be related to the danava mentioned in the Vedas and connected with Vrita, one of the atmospheric demons. He attacks his victims at night, catches them by the throat and sometimes strangles them to death.

7. Rakash. A *rakash* is also a dangerous demon fond of sucking the blood of human beings. It can also assume any form. A *rakash* generally attacks women with children. *It can enter the* house in the form of a cat, dog or ram etc. The female type of *rakash* is called *rakshni.* Sometimes, she assumes the form of a very beautiful woman, seduces men and then kills them and sucks their blood. They attack at night.

8. Matia. This is also a *very powerful and dangerous demon.* It is found in the whirlwinds. He can carry away the roofs of houses, thatches, men, causes strong gales and can break, uproot and wrench trees. It is found mostly in summer when there are many whirlwinds. The people attempt to get away from whirlwinds. Some Sansis and especially women and children were observed saying to a whirlwind, '*Hai bhagi bharia karman wallia, khair karin, parahan parahan langhin*' (O spirit of great destiny and grace, do us no harm and pass away from us.) The people believe that if a whirlwind is disturbed by throwing a brickbat or an old and worn out shoe at it, the demon attacks with a great ferocity.

9. Daien. The *daien* is most feared by the women folk, and especially by those who have small children. *Daien* is a living witch. She has some power of sorcery and as the superstition goes, she can eat up the livers of children. On discovering that such and such woman is a daien, she is hated and shunned by society. The women cover and hide their children from the daien.

10. Badawa or Chhalleda. A badawa is the spirit of a very playful, jovial and nefarious boy. It is called Chhalleda which means one who plays a 'chhal' or a trick on others. His purpose is simple

and innocent and he bamboozles, beguiles and befools a person just for the sake of fun and for nothing more. He plays many harmful tricks on the people They say that a Badawa has a scalplock (Choti of Bodi) on his head. From this it can be concluded that according to the belief of superstitious people a Badawa is always a spirit of Hindu boy. If any person gets hold of his Bodi, then the Badawa becomes his slave and serves his purposes. The Sanai sorcerers tell that when a Badawa is caught fast by his bodi he cries, 'Halo pahria, naale meri bodi putti, naale mainod maria', (O, take pity, you have pulled my scalp-lock and beaten me as well). The Badawa can assume many forms of animals.

EVIL EYE

The most prevalent belief of Sansis is that the eyes of some persons are possessed of evil powers which can injure other persons. *Superstitious people think that the glance of an evil eye-pierces* through a person just like an arrow shot from a bow. This is why, the evil eye is called *Nazar*. The children are particularly succeptible to the effect of evil eyes and they readily lose health or any other quality that they possess in an enviable measure. Sometimes the evil eye may become the cause of illness and even of death. Plants and animals are also affected by it. Bad crops, abortion, miscarriage, disease and death of animals are sometimes attributed to the malevolent effect of the evil eye. Sometimes an accidental damage to a new thing is also considered to be due to the effect of the evil eye. Any mishap whose cause remains unknown is ascribed to the effect of evil eye and some body is condemned for it.

Superstitions regarding snake and other poisonous bites

There is another time honoured cult among the Indians and the Sansis have also a deep—rooted belief in it. It is commonly found in the Punjab that *Gugga Pir* is worshipped as the God of snakes. Some persons know some mantras or incantations whose occult and efficacious power is possessed by them after a long and regular asceticities and meditations. When anybody is bitten by a snake a *Mandri* is called for immediately who comes and with a regular system mutters his charms for the cure of the patient. In most cases the remedy is not sought from medicines and the *Mandris* are the only persons to be depended upon. In some poisonous insects like scorpions, the *Mandri* castes away the pain with the magical power of his incantations. Similarly they depend on the *Mandris* when a mad dog bites anybody. But now they have begun to consult the doctors and physicians for these troubles.

Pains and aches: Leg and head aches are also treated by *Mondris*. Sometimes enchanted ashes are rubbed on the painful part of the body. Sometimes, enchanted water or other edibles are also given to the patients as a cure. The enchanted threads prepared by incantations are also kept or tied round the legs, necks, arms and waist for dispelling different ailments.

Black and white magic. Black magic or 'Kaala Ilum' is especially dreaded by all the people. They believe that the people of Bangal or the people of hills or mountains are very dangerous magicians. Black magic does harm to enemies, or it is malevolent magic, but the white magic is used for both the purposes. White magic is used for bringing good luck, for increasing love between the people, for curing diseases and for winning success. By black magic many people attack each other by using 'Taviz' Masaan, Kujja or by Mutth. Some superstitious people and magicians say that if under certain incantations, needles are driven into a lemon, the enemy is injured like the lemon, wherever he or she may be.

Dwelling of spirits.

Generally the spirits dwell in the cremation grounds or graveyards. They also live in desolate places, old, broken or dry trees. Some spirits live in the riverain and littoral sites. Some people believe that spirits live in broken down houses and walls, and on the mounds of ancient habitations. A place haunted by spirits is called 'Pacca Than'.

Use of spirits. Some magicians have a control over certain spirits and use them for good or for evil. It is interesting that the churel lives mostly in the 'Neem' or tamarind tree and superstitious people believe that this tree should be particularly avoided at night.

How to dispel spirits ?

1. Incantations or Mantras. The most universal method of casting out evil spirits, is by reciting, writing or using mantras or incantations In the beginning the mantras were confined to the Vedic text but now a mantra is 'extended' to all magic forms of words, letters, sounds or any hocuspocus which brings good luck to the happy possessor and evil to his enemies. The spirits are cast out, and the effect of evil eye is cured by mantras. They are often inscribed on paper, or the ink in which they are written is drunk or the papers on which the mantras are written, are kept in metal cases or talismans[6]. Some Sansi chelas or 'Saurias can cast out spirits. One may not believe in spirits and ghosts but none can ignore the belief in spirits in the Sansi sociology. When a person is under the

influence of a spirit of any type, the chelas are called and the patient is seated before them. They give him a fumigation (dhoop) of guggal and then they drive a stab or any other iron weapon into the ground. After this, the chelas begin to recite a long incantation which is given below verbatim as I procured it from Bahadur Mal and Mangat Ram, the Sansi chelas of the village of Isharke in the district of Sheikhupura (West Punjab) :—

Incantation (mantra).

"Madan Shah Ali ko dhanak khaich baan mar
Le kar Shah Shames Ka nam, poora n shan taan mar
Guru Gorakh Naath Ki kirpase, sab marhi masan mar,
Hanuman, Narsingh ko pakar kar pichhar mar
Guru Gian ki potli jadoogar, tamam ke tamam mar,
Kacha masaan mar de, bol Lachhman, Sita, Ram Ram
Sab jin, bhoot, bandh liya jab se pia apne murshad se jaam
Sub dev danoon pari pret, hooae khidmatgar hamare
Jab se para, shahad, sidak se Nanak Guru ke dware
Nank hamari tarf, aanch na lagat, bandh de jin bhoot har jat pat
Bir, Jodh, aur kete butprust, aisi lagao zarb keh do kar mast
Ram Lachhman Sita ke ang ang bandh de, shamshir bandh de tir tafang bandh de
Banduk, tubuk, Bhala, sota, matehar bandh de,
Chhota bara pir faquir Shahar ke shahar bandh de
Parabat va pahar, jodha, soora bandhe de,
Rag nad, jogi jangam sab poora bandh de
Darakhat, mal, khazana, hava ko bandh de
Samund sagar, aal pataal, chalte darya ko bandh de
Sab ore ghari ghari, pahar pahar bandh de
Aal pataal our nagri, gaam, shahr bandh de
Ghat ghat, pran pran, ko bandh de
Chausath jognan, zamin, asmaan bandh de,
Saaz Baaz, dholak, tamoraa, chhatis, rag ko bandh de
Paani, khak, paun, aag ko bandh de,
Sarap, bichhu, zahri naag ko bandh de,
Rewa bandh de jamna ko bandh de,
Saraswati ko bandh de krishna, Narbada, Godavari bandh de,
Jin, bhoot, churel, pret, danoon, tamaam bandh de
Mere guru pir ki shakti se sub kalam ko bandh de
Nihaloom Gandoo, vedere ko faryad kar
Hetam, Narotam aur babe Toto ko yaad kar
Har aafit hazar ho mere guru ke darbar par
Nikaldoon sab jin, bhoot, churel, pret ko maar maar kar,"

The *line-wise English translation of this incantation* is given below :—

"Shoot Madan Shah Ali with an arrow stretching your bow
By the grace of Shah Shames hit your target perfectly
By the kindness of Guru Gorakh Naath do away with the evils of cremation ground
Knock down Hanuman and Narsingh
With the force of the knowledge of your Guru kill all the magicians
Utter, Lachman, Sita, Ram and kill evil spirits
I have tied all the jins and bhoots since I have drunk a cup from my teacher
All the evil spirits and monsters have become our slaves
Since I have recited Shabad at the door of Guru Nanak
Nanak is on our side, none can harm us, kill all the evil spirits of all the communities
All the brave and idol worshippers should be brought under control
Bind all the organs, of Lachhman, Ram and Sita, bind sword and gun
Bind gun, musket, spear, mortar etc.
Bind all the small and great, saints, beggars and whole of the city.
Bind the mountain, the brave
Bind Music, sound, yogi, ascetic completely
Bind the tree, wealth, treasure and wind,
Bind oceans and seas and bind under-worlds and running rivers
Bind everything in all the directions at all the times
Bind underworlds, habitations, villages and cities,
Bind the very inside of hearts
Bind sixty-four jognan, earth and sky
Bind all the musical instruments, dholak and thirty-six ragas
Bind snakes, scorpions and poisonous cobras
Bind the devil with a strong lock of chain.
Bind the fairy named Ashak and bind whole of the country of the fairies
Bind the river Reva and Jamna
Bind the rivers Saraswati, Krishna, Narbada and Godawari,
Bind jin, bhoot, churel, pret, danoon, all of them
Remember your sainted dead ancestors, Nihaloo, Gandoo
Remember Hetam, Narotam and Baba Toto
Every evil spirit must present itself before my Guru

I will cast out all the jins, bhoots, churels and prets with a sound beating."

A close study of this incantation clearly indicates that, it is surely a distortion of some old Hindu mantra. With the passage of time the inclusion of the names of some gods, goddesses, prophets, and Gurus of later times have also crept into this mantra. Anyhow this mantra is a good indication of the belief and culture of the Sansis as it has been travelling since ancient times. Rose[7] has also given a similar mantra of the Sansi *chelas* of Punjab. But as he himself confesses the mantra remained unintelligible to him and his reproduction of the incantation is also unintelligible.

After reciting this incantation in regular rhythm, the chela comes into afflatus and wags his head in quick movements. After a few minutes the patient also begins to wag his head and now both of them wag their heads rapidly. This is called *'Khedna'*. Then the *chela* questions the whereabouts of the spirit, in a very dignified voice. At this time it is believed that the spirit is present and it is actually this spirit which is wagging its head. The spirit has to speak through the patient and act through the body of the patient but the spirit obstinately keeps silent. Then the chela catches the patient by the locks and a dispute begins between them. At last by beating and threatening to put excreta or beaf in the mouth of the spirit, if the spirit is Hindu and pork in case of Muslim spirit the spirit is made to speak through the mouth of the patient. The chela orders the spirit to give up the patient but the spirit is stubborn At this time the chela slaps the patient or beats him with his stick. At last the spirit promises to leave the patient readily and never revisit him or his family. The author has seen such occasions of casting out spirit many a time Once it was seen that a spirit was about to leave the patient; the chela said to it, 'I do not believe in you. You are dishonest. How can I believe that you will leave the patient for ever? Give me a promise of your going." The spirit replied, 'Yes' I swear by my faith that I will never haunt the patient again, and now I go" The chela agreed and he left the locks of the victim. I know the patient personally that he used to remain ill and in great distress inspite of using many medicines from qualified doctors. After that he never fell sick and still he is living happily, having a wife and six children. It is interesting to note that according to Michael Hervey[8] the belief in witch craft is found in modern cities of civilized countries of the world, London, Sydney, Paris, Hanover, Okehampton, Brixham and in many cities of America. Stephen Fuchs[9] and Hatch[10] also mention the efficacy of witch craft and mantras.

2. *Filthy and abusive language.* Dirty language is also used to scare away evil spirits. They say that the nakedness of a man is also repellent to the evil spirits. So some of the persons while passing through the cremation grounds and grave yards, put off their clothes

3. *Ashes.* According to the belief of superstitious people, the ashes are also very useful in getting rid of evil spirits. This is why that after birth ashes are applied to the new born baby that no spirit should touch him, though in reality it is used for drying the baby. A circle of ashes round a person is also considered useful to scare away evil spirits.

4. *Charcoal.* Similarly black charchoal is efficacious.

5. *Ornaments.* Beads and bangles are also useful in frightening the evil spirits. They believe that a certain colour repels demons and other evil spirits, but the metals are more effective than glass.

6. *Colours.* The evil spirits fear certain colours, especially black, red and yellow. It is due to these reasons that termeric of yellow colour is used in many rites of marriage. Lamp black is put on the face of the beautiful children to protect them from evil eyes. Collyrium (surma or kajjal) is also put in the eyes for the same purpose. Red sallos and vermilion (sandhoor) are also used on many functions for the same errand.

7. *Metals.* Iron is especially powerful and efficacious in repelling evil spirits. Similarly, copper and some other metals have their magical utility. This is the reason why some copper ornaments are used and the articles and arms made of iron are kept under the pillow of a mother who gives birth to child.

8. *Threads.* The use of threads indicates that the evil spirits are tied with them and thus they are rendered helpless. At many functions, and particularly at marriages, the use of mauli (red and yellow threads) is extensively used for the same object.

9. *Thorns.* Some people spread thorns before the door of the house at the birth of a child so that evil spirits may not enter the house to attack the mother and the baby. We read, 'At the door of delivery the thorny branches of bel and nagphani are spread to intercept evil spirit"

10. The leaves of certain trees are also used and it is for this reason that the leaves of mango and shareehn are hung at the door of the room in which the child is born.

11. *Incense and smoke.* The smell of certain substances and their smoke attracts the gods, but dispels evil spirits. This is why that asafoedits is used for smoke and ghee is used as an incense.

12. *Certain figures also frighten the evil spirits.* It is due to this superstition that we find that certain figures are drawn in some houses, inside and outside. The Brahmans draw figures on their foreheads for this reason.

13. *Leather.* Leather is also used as a repellent and the leather mascots are tied round the arms and necks. Sometimes we see that beautiful cows and buffaloes which have calved recently, bear some pieces of leather or a pair of worn out shoes, round their necks as a prevention against evil eye and evil spirits.

14. *Black pots.* Some people believe that the evil spirits fear black pots and especially old earthen black pots. These are often seen placed upside down on the newly built buildings and houses. Similarly old black earthen pots (haandis) are hung on the stick in the fields so that the evil eye or spirits may not affect growth and yield of the crops.

15. Last but not the least is the belief of religious minded people that hymns couplets or any other sacred compositions, when read and recited with a pure mind, are a great force in driving away and destroying evil spirits.

OMENS

Hinduism is a peculiar combination of rites, rituals, customs and ceremonies concerned with every phase of life. So, like many other beliefs, omens have also a conspicuous place in Indian life. An omen is any involuntary happening which predicts future events. An omen is a type of prognosis or prediction. Omens interfere in days, months and directions also. They have a concern in foods, garments, and ornaments. A Hindu is as much concerned with omens as with food regulations. This is the reason that in his tour of first general elections of idependent India in 1951, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru said in his speech at Ludhiana, 'Hinduism is a kitchen religion'. Hinduism is indeed an omen-bound creed. The Sansis are great believers in augury and some of their important omens are given below :—

1. The greatest omen of Sansis is a sneeze. At the beginning of some work or at the time of starting on journey, if some body sneezes, the Sansis will postpone the work or the journey, however, important it may be. They have another antidote against it. Some of them do not postpone the work of the journey because of a sneeze, but they just stop for a while and they proceed with their undertaking. If a person sneezes twice in succession, it is not an ill omen.

2. If after starting on a journey anybody accidently calls from behind, the omen is bad and it is better to postpone the business.

3. If a teli (oil-man) is met on the way while starting on a journey, the omen is bad.

4. A widow met in good clothes is a bad omen.

5. A person met with an empty vessel is a bad omen but if met with a pitcher full of something, then the omen is good. If a pregnant mother meets a person with pitcher full of something, then the omen is still better.

6. If by chance, oil is spilt when going somewhere, the omen is good, as they believe that the enemy is avoided.

7. If one sees three men when beginning something, the omen is bad, but it is good if one sees four men sitting together in a friendly way.

8. The braying of a donkey is not a good omen, if it does from behind, but if it brays in front of a person while going, it is a good omen.

9. If a person's turban falls down while starting, it has grave consequences and the work in hand must be given up for the time being.

10. If one meets a deformed person, the omen is bad.

11. If one's path is crossed by a snake, deer, mangooze, crow, kite or a cat, the omen is very bad.

12. Meeting a mad dog or a police man means a very dangerous omen.

13. Seeing a cow just on opening one's eyes in the morning at the time of rising means a very good omen.

14. A barber and a Brahmān together can be a bad portent.

15. If on beginning something, a dead body is seen being carried to the cremation ground or grave yard, as a funeral procession the omen is very good because it indicates the most inevitable truth of life,—death.

Regarding background of their belief in this omen, the Sansis relate an interesting legend of their Rajput ancestors, which is briefly given below :—

They say that once a Muslim invader attacked Bhatner, the famous place of the Bhatti Rajputs of Rajputana. The Muslim enemies were 5000 in number but the Rajputs were only 300. The spy of the Rajputs brought in advance to them the news of the arrival and attack of the enemy and also informed them of the superiority of the invader, both in number and equipment. The Rajputs knew well how to give a brave fight to such enemies and how to die on the battle fields like the brave. They decided to meet the foes outside the city of Bhatner and kill or be killed. Hence the 300

Rajputs rode on their chargers and equipping themselves with the best of armoury which they possessed, they started. Just coming out of the town wall, they saw a funeral procession carrying a dead body to the cremation ground. They relate that that was the dead body of some pious man of the town. The brave Rajputs took it to be a very terrible omen and their leader said, "I think the sight of this dead body has predicted our defeat and destruction. This is a very bad omen." It is believed that a miraculous voice came from the dead body, "O brave Rajputs, you are mistaken to take this sight to be a bad omen. This is the best omen as death wins over all the powers and plans of man and death is the greatest truth of life. Go and fight against the approaching enemies the success will kiss your feet." The Rajputs faced the enemy with double courage and indeed the 300 Rajputs utterly routed the 5000 Muslim enemies. From that day onwards, this omen is thought to be a very good omen.

16. If, on beginning something, or on starting on a journey some weeping persons are seen, the omen is bad.

17. The maternal uncle and his nephew (sister's son) must never sit together when it is lightning.

18. If on starting, one sees a crow perched on somebody or on the person himself or herself, the work must be given up.

19. The hiccup is ascribed to the remembrance of the person by some friends or relatives.

20. On beginning some work if one sees somebody fighting and bleeding, the omen is bad.

21. Starting on a journey on Sunday is not considered good.

22. Wednesday is the most auspicious day for any purpose. They say, "Budh Kam Sudh" (Budh makes the purpose successful).

23. Like other Hindus, the Sansis do not think it good to wash hair or head on Tuesday.

24. A Brahman seen with a religious book and 'tilak' on his forehead is auspicious.

25. If a burning lamp is seen on the way-side, the omen is very good.

26. Meeting a woman with a healthy male child, is an auspicious omen.

27. If a jackal crosses the way, the omen is bad.

28. If a fox or a dog howls at night it indicates the death of some member of the family or some close relative.

29. If, on starting, a branch of tree or tree falls down suddenly, the omen is bad.

30. The owl is thought to be a very inauspicious bird and if it shrieks at night, it must be understood to invoke destruction and desolation.

31. The cry of a kite heard at night is a bad omen.

32. The fighting of cats at night is a bad omen.

33. To see a freshly broken pot when departing is a bad omen.

34. A lizzard is always a good omen but if fowls are seen, the omen is bad.

35. A partridge, if heard chirping, on the left, while one is travelling, is good, but it is bad if it chirps on the right hand. It is the same when one is halting somewhere.

36. On starting, if a dog wags his head (kan phatkana), it forebodes danger and the work proposed is postponed.

37. If on starting, one finds a coin, the omen is very good.

38. If one stumbles over a stone or slips and falls, while starting, the omen is very bad.

39. If on starting, good tiding is given, the omen is very good.

40. If one sees a marriage party along with bridegroom or bride, or both, the omen presages sure success and joy.

41. The Sansis have also some omens attached with dreams. If one weeps in a dream some joy is approaching and the dream is good.

42. If one laughs whole-heartdly in a dream, some bad event is sure to take place.

43. A policeman seen in a dream is sure to have a very bad and harmful effect.

44. A snake, mad dog, fighting rams, fighting he-bufalloes, fighting bulls and camels seen in dreams are bad omen.

45. If one sees a dead body or one dies in dream, it means that the dreamer will live long

46. Dreaming of falling sick means good health.

47. To dream of a ride on elephants signifies a natural and extraordinary rise in life, because it is the kings and queens who ride on elephants.

48. To dream of visiting religious shrines and assembly of saints, gives a good indication of one's pious life.

Worship

It has already been mentioned that all the Sansis worship their ancestral god, Raja Sansmal, his two sons, Mahla nad Baehdoo and his twenty three grandsons who were heads of twenty three different clans or subscstes of Sansis. At all the ceremonies, they perform

libation (tapaana) invoking names of their ancestors and some other gods and godesses. They also worship *Sitla Devi*, *Gugga*, *Latanwali* or *Jawala* of kangra. Besides the above names, they worship their following tribal sainted dead.

1. **Nihaloo Gandoo.** Nihaloo and Gandoo were two brothers. The name of their father was Atra, an inhabitant of village Othian Sohian in the district of Sialkot, in Duska Tehsil (West Punjab). They were very pious persons and they renunciated the world, they had been doing noble deeds and good services to other people. Their tombs or 'Samaadhs' are situated in the village of Khanghure' in Gujranwala District. The Sansis of Punjab have different sacrificial and dedicating prayers (sukhnas) for the fulfilment of their wishes and desires. On their fulfilment, the Sansis go and worship at their tombs, spilling ghee and other gifts over them. Sometimes rams and he—goats are sacrificed at their tombs. Nihaloo Gandoo are also believed to be very powerful saviours of the Sansis in scaring away evil spirits and this is the reason that they have been invoked in the incantation given in this research paper.

2. **Hem Narotam and Toto :** These three sainted dead of the Sansis also belonged to Othian Sohian They lived in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Their father's name was Shaunki as mentioned by H. A. Rose[12] also. Hem and Toto were possessed of great divine power. The Sansis believe that Hem and Narotam were two brothers, and they could ride on walls and make them run like horses and trains. They are also the protective gods of the Sansis and so they are worshipped. They died at Othian Sohian and their tombs are made in that area. They are worshipped by the Sansis

3. **Fatah Shahid (Fatah the martyr) :** He is worshipped for his bravery. His tomb is found at Malla, a village of Brahmans in the Sialkot district. The tomb is constructed on an ancient mound, a little north of Malla The Sansis tell that once in an encounter on a dark night, while fighting with his enemies, Fatah, the brave, was killed by his own brother-in-law and his sister's son (bhanooja and bhanewan) by mistake. He is acknowledged as a martyr (shahid) and his tomb is worshipped by the Sansis of Punjab.

4. **Faqira and Binder.** They are also the sainted dead of the Sansis. They were very pious and god loving men. The Sansis believe in them as beneficial and protective ancestral gods.

5. **Malang Shah.** He was a famous saint of the Punjab and is revered by many communities. He was a Sansi. His father's name was Basu Sansi. He renounced the world and lived and died in Punjab in the meditation of God. He is worshipped by the Sansis as

a divine soul. H. A. Rose[13] also gives an account of this Sansi saint of Punjab.

6. **Mai Lakhi.** Mai Lakhi was a very pious woman. She *remained a virgin and was pure all her life. She renounced worldly* life and lived and died in the jungles. Her tomb is found in the village named Tatle[14] in the district of Gujranwala. The Sansis of Punjab worship her tomb also.

Besides worshipping these sainted the Sansis annually gather to worship at the tombs of some saints at the following places :—

1. To worship Pir Sakhi Sultan at Nagaha.
2. At Phalaudi in Jaiselmer.
3. Bibrain in Bikaner.
4. Bajrang garh in Aligarh district (U. P.)
5. Jawala Mukhi in Kangra district, Punjab.
6. Naukhera in Etah District (U. P.).

7. **Worship of Gugga :** In the month of Bhadon, the Sansis of Punjab worship Gugga, the god of snakes. They plaster their houses with cowdung Then they prepare 'choorma' of the chapatis of 'dalia' (Coarse—ground flour of wheat), gur and ghee. Then they light seven dough lamps, putting ghee in them. Some choorma is placed before the burning lamps. Then all the members of the family venerate the burning lamps, prostrating before them praying to Gugga to protect them from the bites of the snakes and other poisionous animals and insects. The choorma thus placed before the lamps is not to be eaten by anybody. It is left as it is. The choorma and dough lamps are not disturbed by anybody and they are consumed by the fowls, dogs, cats or rats etc. The rest of the choorma prepared is eaten by the members of the family.

Festivals

1. **Haari da choorma.** In the Punjab haari indicates the harvest of wheat, the major food crop of Punjab. Haari da choorma means the choorma which the Sansis make after passing a happy, profitable and safe harvest. They celebrate haari on any day in the month of Haar, May. After collection of haari the Sansis plaster their houses with cowdung and prepare choorma. Then the choorma is offered to their tribal gods. First the choorma is thrown on the roof of the house invoking the names of all the ancestors who were regarded as saints. A handful of this propitiated choorma is retained which is distributed among all the members of the family as a 'parshad' or 'shareeni. Then the family eats the rest of the choorma.

2. *Diwali* : The Sansis pay a special attention to the celebra-

tion of the Diwali festival. In the morning they rise early and all the members of the family have a bath. Then they give water to their 'pitters' (dead ancestors). They also prepare some sweet dish on that day and eat it with great joy and fun. At night they illuminate the house with lamps (deevas—countrymade earthen lamps) which are lighted putting oil into them and a wick made, twisting lint).

3. *Haand*: Haand literally means a ramble or wandering, but the Sansis explain it as hunting. Haand is a peculiar practice of the Sansis. The Sansis are very fond of hunting. Most of the Hindus, even educated, think it their sacred duty to go for hunting at the Diwali festival. Some of the old Sansis say that they have been observing this practice of hunting on the day of Diwali since very ancient times, according to the practice of their ancestors. They say that originally their ancestors used to kill a deer on this day because it was due to the illusion and mischief of a deer in the jungle that Rama and Lakshman went out for its hunting and in their absence Sita was seized and carried away by Ravana. So they believe it to be a sacred and religious duty to kill some deer on the Diwali festival on which Rama, Lakshmana and Sita came back to Ayodhia, after a long exile of 14 years.

The principle is that they must hunt within their own village and on this day they should not encroach on the hunting grounds of other Sansis of neighbouring villages. The game killed should be divided among all the members of the Sansis present in the hunting party. This is a very fine expression of their tribal unity. Even a Sansi passing by who is present at the spot of distribution, will get his full share of the game. There is no question of having hounds ; one simply joins the hunting party upto the distribution of the hunted game If they kill sufficient game, then they think it to be a good and auspicious omen for whole of the coming year.

Besides these festivals they celebrate almost all the festivals of the Hindus and the Sikhs in accordance with the belief of the people among whom they live.

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THE SACRED COMPLEX IN A MALER HILLY VILLAGE OF SANTHAL PARGANA

L. P. Vidyarthi

The present paper embodies my preliminary attempt[1] to examine the religious beliefs and rituals of the Maler tribe[2] of Rajmahal hills in the district of Santhal Pargana of Bihar State. In the first section of this paper, an attempt has been made to describe the conception of the Maler about the spirits and supernatural power, and in the second section of the paper the "Sacred Complex" of Benderi village has been described in terms of the three analytic concepts : sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialists with a view to understand the nature of the Maler religion (Vidyarthi 1961 A).

This study, methodological in nature, suggests that the sacred complex in Benderi, considered culturally, is essentially little traditional (Redfield 1955), and structurally it is exclusively of local importance[3]. Secondly, the sacred complex of Benderi further refers to its relationship with the local ecology, agricultural operations and above all with the local society. In other words it casually refers to the relationship of "spirit" with the Maler economic and social life. This relationship, however, has been fully developed in the monographic study of the author on this tribe (Vidyarthi 1961 B).

The ethnographic materials used here have been collected from the village Benderi which was visited by me with some of my Post graduate students in the years 1956 (Feb—March) and 1959 (Sept.—Oct.). Besides intensive study of Benderi, another village Tetuli was also carefully studied. In addition to the intensive study of these two villages, I have made extensive study of more than fifteen villages during the last five years[4].

Conception About Gossaiyan :

Gossaiyan is a household word for the Maler which every Maler villager comes to know from his very childhood. This term is used to denote a cluster of spirits that are believed to guide their destiny. Every child, adult, and old, every commoner and the specialist and every male and female have some sort of conception in their mind about the spirit and the supernatural power which they call by this common term Gossaiyan. The Maler children are instructed about the Gossaiyan from the very beginning. They are asked not

to touch the family sacred centre[5] (*Jhanda Gossaiyan*) located beside the hut, or go to the village sacred zone (*Manjhi than*) or to pass across the village graveyard or to avoid certain trees or spots that might be haunted by the evil spirit, or to avoid certain persons who might be noted for their witchcraft and evil eyes. The author observed several situations when the parents and elder siblings forbade their creeping children from going near the above mentioned family and village sacred centres. The term Gossaiyan, thus, becomes familiar to the ears of even the creeping infants. From the statement of one of my informants, Dasma Rami, this process becomes very clear (Vidyarthi : 1959)

"When I was very young and innocent my father had told me repeatedly that the Paharia can live on the hills only when they will please the supernatural powers. He used to say that the Paharia are alive only on the mercy of the Gossaiyan, Bhute etc. . Since then I have been keeping deep faith in the power of the supernatural beings."

A young boy Kanho of Benderi, who is only 15 years old, in course of his biographical statement emphasises the importance of Gossaiyan in the following words. "I have deep faith in the power of Gossaiyan, the worship of Gossaiyan is as essential as the air and food for us. The failure of crops and rains, the spread of epidemic diseases and such other calamities are all the result of displeasure of the gods and goddesses etc." (Vidyarthi : 1959.)

Another boy Sanjori of the same village laments about the chain of bad luck that he has been facing from the childhood. He interprets all his bad events as the wrath of the Gossaiyan. He says ;

"At the age of 11 years, unfortunately, my father died of small-pox. Even when I have not forgotten the death of my father, just after five months my close friend Rupa also breathed his last. In this way, I have been facing a chain of bad luck which is all due to the anger of the Gossaiyan." (Vidyarthi : 1959)

As a Maler advances in age, and as he sees and experiences the hazards of life in the hilly villages, his belief in the Gossaiyan becomes more and more entrenched. One of my informants Jawra paharia of Tetuli who is 35 years old states his belief in Gossaiyan in the following strong word :

"I have a deep rooted belief in the power of Gossaiyan, the disease, the famine, the scarcity of water, the low fertility of soil, the low production of crops, high incidence of death etc. all these happen only when the evil spirits (Bhuts) and Gossaiyan (Gods and Goddess-

-es) are not worshipped properly and the sacrifices are not made timely" (Vidyarthi : 1959).

Chamru (50) of the village Tetuli makes similar statements and further comments in the following words :

"Last year the villagers worshipped these Gossaiyan late and owing to this the whole village confronted with a dangerous and infectious disease of small pox. This disease spread all over the village. Many people including children and women died." He further spoke with all faith that if he would like to survive on the hills he would have to please these spirits.

In a similar manner the other adult informants have emphasised the importance of the Gossaiyan · "they have been surviving on the mercy of these powers" .."the crop could not grow, if the people would not get rain," pox would spread out in the village and the people would die.

The religious functionaries and diviners (sacred specialists) of the Maler villages share the common belief mentioned above about the existence and power of the Gossaiyan. The sacred head of the village, the Manjhiye, (for example of Tetuli and Benderi) of course, knew more about the various types of Gossaiyan and could classify them in terms of their benevolent and mischievous functions. The Guraits of these villages also appeared to be more alert regarding the interpretation of the nature and types of Gossaiyan and their evil and harmful activities in the surrounding villages. Besides these hereditary sacred specialists however, the trained sacred specialist, the Guru, knew more about the nature of the Bhuts and other Gossaiyan.

The Guru who is a village diviner and a medicant is supposed to be well-versed in knowledge about spirits, and supernatural powers, and he will be the subject matter of our study is a separate section on the sacred specialist.

When we further try to understand the distinction that the Maler make about these spirits and supernatural powers, we may safely classify them into four major groups. They are (i) Gossaiyans, (benevolent spirits) (ii) Jiwe Urkkya (ancestral spirits), (iii) Alchi (evil spirits) and (iv) Chergani (witchcraft).

(i) **Gossaiyans.** The Maler conceive and name all those spirits as Gossaiyan which are basically benevolent and which give life, health, and properties to the Maler. They are represented by stones, bamboos, wooden frames, rivers, planets, and are worshipped regularly at the family and the village levels. When timely offerings and sacrifices are not made to the Gossaiyan, they change their roles and

bring in disease, death, failure of crops, accidents and such other calamities for the family or the village concerned. Such Gossaiyan, are *Amte Gossaiyan*, *Beru Gossaiyan* (Sun), *Bilpu Moon Gossaiyan*, *Bindke Gossaiyan* (Stars), *Chāl nādu*, *Egopacho*, *Goddā Jāmā*, *Jaglāni Gossaiyan*, *Kanhaiyā Nādu*, *Kuri Gossaiyan*, *Mullā Gossaiyan*, *Muri Gossaiyan*, *Makkukero Gossaiyan*, *Rāksi Nādu*, *Singpāti Nādu*, *Sahai Gossaiyan*.

(ii) The Jiwe Urkkya is the name given to the spirit of the dead relatives who might have died a few years ago and whose spirit might be hovering round the hut or near the village or the *Masāni* (graveyard). The Maler conceive these ancestral spirits as essentially benevolent spirits but they become harmful like the Gossaiyan if timely and befitting sacrifices are not made in their names. The ancestral spirits may appear in dreams or express themselves through the village shaman, the *Demāno*. They communicate their desires and needs either in the dream of their relatives or through the village Demano specially on the occasions of the Bhoje festival observed to pacify the ancestors.

(iii) The Alchi or Bhuts (evil spirits) are basically manivolent and evil spirits and in all the cases, they bring in calamities in shape of disease, death, abortion and such other calamities to the Maler individuals. The Maler are very afraid of the Alchi and they strongly believe that whenever they (the Alchi) get a chance, they harm the Maler individuals. The Alchi live in and around the burial place, near a stream, on some isolated trees on the outskirt of the village. They are, in general, invisible and are not symbolised by the Maler with any items as the Gossaiyan. Some of the Maler villagers, however, have seen these manivolent spirits and through them the villagers have developed, a conception about the physiognomy of some of these evil spirits. At Benderi, the villagers named four alchi : *Dinde, Jame, Amnārāhh* or *Amki* and *Mari*. At Tetuli, the villagers believe in the presence of seven Alchi in and around the village. They are *Ampacho, Simadandi, Umble Cheno, Erbekker, Dindi and Māri*. The Guru (village diviner) is supposed to drive away the Alchi when it affects any person.

(iv) The supernatural belief of the Maler is further reflected in the *Chergani* (witchcraft). The Maler believe that a chergi (witch) is a malignant creature and being in league with the evil spirits, she brings about disease, death, failure of crops and such other calamities to a Maler individual. The whole matter about the witch and the witchcraft is enveloped in secrecy and the element of fear further checks the Maler to talk about a witch and her activities. At Benderi,

we could know about one middle aged woman, Rami (35 years), who was an established witch. Rami lost her husband just after her marriage and then she was married again to Gangu of the same village. She gave birth to two daughters but both of them died. Her husband Gangu and other villagers suspected her to be the cause of all these deaths in the family and declared her to be a witch When the Guru administered *Telpattā*[6] on the occasions of illness of Dharma Rama and Surja, he further confirmed that the disease was caused by Rami and he cured them by performing *Jhār Phook*[7] in her name. The villagers have no clear idea as to how she underwent the training in acquiring this supernatural power They, however, guess that she learnt witchcraft from some Santhal witch of the neighbouring village, *Pathalghattā* where she spent her childhood with her father who used to live there in connection with the cultivation of his paddy land. The villagers believe that on several nights she goes to the *Masani* (graveyard) at the dead of night, undress herself completely and dance there for the whole night to please the *Masani Alchi* (the evil spirit of graveyard) She continues to do so to maintain her supernatural power. The villagers of Benderi and also of the neighbouring villages are very afraid of her and avoid her doings as any displeasure on her part may bring death for the individual concerned.

Rami, divorced by her husband has got shelter in her brother's house, Kanhoo, and inspite of our all efforts she did not speak even a word to us. Her will power was definitely very high in comparison to the average Maler villagers We could not know much about her as the villagers were suspicious that she may cause trouble to those who would pass any information about her,

We do not come across any witch in the other village, Tetuli. The villagers, however, believed in the evil effects of witchcraft and faintly remembered about one Surji who was a witch in the village about 60 years ago. In other villages that we visited, we found the villagers believing in the supernatural power of the witches but nobody disclosed to us except at Garhsingla about the presence of a witch in the villages

The witches, thus, in a Maler village wields a powerful influence owing to her supernatural power to cause disease, death, and destruction of the harvest. The evil spirits, at times work through, her as she is in link with the Masani Alchi with which the Maler are most afraid of. The Maler villagers do not have clear conception about the way a witch operates her supernatural power to attack an individual or a harvest. At Benderi it was reported that when a witch wants to harm anybody, she takes a small piece of human

bone, apply *Sindoor* (Vermilion) on it and ties it with a long *tali* (hair) taken out of her head. She makes certain utterances to empower them and then she stealthily covers it near the hut or under the hearth of the person whom she wants to harm. This works immediately and the person concerned soon feels pain in his or her body, end then falls ill In case he fails to take help of the Guru, the village diviner, his illness may end into death. Similarly when she wants to destroy the harvest of an individual she goes with such a piece of bone tied with her hair and buries it in the field, and the harvest is gradually ruined.

The above mentioned four types of supernatural powers, the Gossaiyan, the Alchi, the Jiwe Urkkya and the Chergani have their respective importance in the Maler villages. But it is also evident from the above brief description that the Alchi (Evil spirits or Bhute) are negative forces in the spirit world of the Maler, and are given offerings and sacrifices when they affect any individual. The Chergani (witchcraft) which works through a person of the village is also an occasional event in the Maler village. When a particular person is bewitched, he is helped by the Guru to drive away the evil effect. Thus, both the above type of supernatural spirits are more awed than revered by the villagers, and they are taken by the Maler villagers as supernatural problems which they solve as far as possible with the help of the village diviners and the shammans. The other two types of supernatural powers—the Gossaiyan and the Jiwe Urkkya are the fountain-spring of the Maler religion. The Maler, have developed a set of rituals, a cycle of sacrifices, a series of feast and festivals which revolve round their belief in the Gossainyan and Jiwe Urkkya. Among these two again, their belief in Jiwe Urkkya has helped the Maler in developing a set of funeral rituals and a series of festive occasions for ancestral worship, the details of which have been discussed elsewhere (Vidyarthi 1961 B). The Gossaiyan, as is evident from the extracts taken out from the biographies of the Maler informant, dominate the thinking of the Maler villagers and their belief in this form of spirit primarily regulates the religious and supernatural activities of the community.

With this background about the conception of the Maler obout the Gossaiyan and their beliefs in the different forms of spirits, we come to discuss the symbolic representation, rituals and functionaries especially in relation to their belief in the Gossaiyan. Here, we will attempt to understand the function of religion as reflected in the village Benderi under the 'three analytic concepts—the sacred

geography, the sacred performances and the sacred specialists. (Vidyarthi 1961 A.)

Sacred Geography

At the level of observation when one enters the Benderi village of the Maler, he comes across certain symbols represented by bamboos, wooden frames, small huts, stones and trees which have certain vermilion and other such signs (pitcher, Arwa rice, dried flowers, dried blood-spots), that lead one to think that they are the Maler sacred centres or shrines. These sacred centres representing the different Gossaiyan of the villagers are located in many places in the village and in its surrounding hills and forests, and they go to constitute the sacred geography of the village.

The Sacred Centre

The first sacred place that attracts our attention is the *Manji Than* which is located on the eastern outskirt of the village settlement. This sacred place, as a matter of fact is the main sacred zone of the village. This is the zone where the Jhanda-Gossaiyan of the village is located. A very long bamboo with a piece of triangular red cloth symbolises this village deity of the Jhanda-Gossaiyan. On its left side are two pieces of black stone which symbolise *Singpate Nadu*. *Singpate Nadu* is usually worshipped and the sacrifices are made in its name on the occasion of the *Bandna* festival. A little ahead to the left side (15 yards) again, is a pair of wooden pillars with holes on the upper portion which function as an alter for the sacrifice of buffallos during the Mañgarwin sacrifice (Buffalo sacrifice or Kara puja). In their back one sees an impoverished small hut (five feet wide, four feet long) covered with wild creepers, which is an integral part of the sacred zone, and it symbolises the very powerful Gossaiyan of the village, Gram Devati. In addition to these permanent symbols, the open land in the front, is considered to be sacred and is used for taking oath, worshipping such Gossaiyan which are not permanently symbolised, and for holding the sittings of the Panchayat for deciding the cases concerning the breach of Maler customary laws and taboos in the village. This use of the sacred zone shows their divine consideration in deciding cases and taking of oath etc. Adjacent to this sacred zone, on both the sides are two huts[8] owned by the Manjhiye who is the sacred head of the village and it is after his office, that the sacred zone of the village is also termed as Manjhiye Thān. Thus the main Gossaiyan of the village and the main sacred specialist, the Manjhiye and the major sacred performances are observed in this part of the village which may be rightly called as the "sacred zone of Benderi".

The sacred geography of Bender, however, does not stop only with the sacred zone located on the outskirt of the village. There are several sacred centres located outside the village on the hills and forest, and inside the village in and around the huts of the individual families living in the village

When we proceed about 100 yards from the eastern end of the village settlement and also from the village sacred zone, we observe on our left an extensive flat area covered with old and large trees alongwith wild creepers This is the village graveyard or *Masāni*, the abode of spirits of their dead ancestors It begins on the Southern side and continues linearly towards the North. The *Masāni* as we have discussed earlier is an important place of ritual sacrifices and worship for the ancestors, and it may be considered another sacred zone of the village. Just on the outskirt of the *Masāni* is a place known for the abode of a powerful Gossaiyan called Amte Gossaiyan. This Gossaiyan is worshipped so that the ancestors' spirits may live in peace and may not cause harm to the living ones. The *Amte Gossaiyan* is located in the centre of the western margin of the *Masāni* and is represented by a *Koto* or *Bel* tree and scattered pieces of stones This Gossaiyan is worshipped annually on the second day of the *Bandnā* or Bhoje festivals by the individual families by making sacrifices of pig or hen according to the oracle of the village Demano (Shaman).

A little ahead of the Masāni but far removed from it towards the southern slope of the hill (about 1 furlong from the southern end of the Masāni) is an attractive and important sacred centre called *Chāl Nādu* by the villagers. Chal Nadu is represented by a set of black basaltic stones and snow-white quartz mineral. The pieces of these stones about nine in numbers are arranged very artistically and in the middle of them an earthen pot has also been enshrined. The whole area covered by this sacred centre comes to be six feet in length and five feet in width. Annual sacrifices of one goat, one chicken and one calf along with the offerings of *taddi* (country liquor) are made to this Gossaiyan on the first day of the Bandna festival. This worship of Chāl Nādu is observed on the village level and the cost of sacrifices is met by subscription from all the families of the village

A little removed from the Chal Nadu towards the north-east (about 50 yards) is located another Maler Gossaiyan *Moto-Garāi* or *Rāksi Nādu*. This sacred centre is represented by eleven cylinderical stones, arranged in one straight row. These stones are of black basaltic rock and are located in the forest grove. We noted vermilion

marks and pieces of pots near this sacred centre. Raksi Nadu is worshipped annually in the month of Bhader (Bhado, August—September) when sacrifice of a fowl or a hog or a goat is made by the Gurait of the village Before the sacrifice is done they wash the symbolic stones with water, make vermilion marks on the stones, sprinkle water and *arwā* rice and pour *taldi* on them This sacrifice is made on the village level and is followed by drinks and dances. Rāksi Nādu is also worshipped when the villagers go for collective hunting. On this occasion an egg is sacrificed by the *Gurāit* and the first body of the hunt is offered to this *Nādu*.

Thus, we note that the eastern and south-eastern margins of the village are abode of many gossaiyan which are represented by stones or trees or both. If we follow the central hilly pathways of the village towards the south, at a distance of about 150 yards we come across another stone shrine of Benderi called *Kanhaiyā Nādu*. This sacred centre is located in a deep jungle about 50 yards below the village level and is on a slope. It is represented by a collection of black basaltic boulders under two old trees of *Kadam Betra* and *Tissokomo Betra*. The Kanhaiya Nadu is also worshipped on the village level on the occasion of Bandna festival for good health, property and rich harvest. The sacrifice of fowls, goats and cows is made on the village level. The Manjhiye makes the major sacrifice of cow while the Gurait sacrifices the Goat. The detailed process of worshipping Kanhaiya Nadu is similar to Raksi Nadu.

Down below in the south (about 300 yards from Kanhaiyā Nādu) flows the hill stream (called *Jharnā* by the villagers) which is a place where the ordeal of Saveli is held as it is considered sacred and is believed by the villagers that it would help in finding out the truth about the accused in the divine ordeal. This stream marks the southern boundary of the village Benderi and it is also believed that occasional worship of the *Jharnā* would not allow the Bhut (evil spirit) to enter within the village boundary.

In the western side of the village, about 100 yards from the western end of the village is *Bender Nādu*. It is also called *Tuddu Nādu* as its worship would prevent the tiger (Tuddu) from entering the village. This sacred centre named after the village (*Benderi*) as well as after the tiger (Tuddu) is represented by four black basaltic boulders below an old, large and wild tree Bender Nādu is worshipped in the month of Bhāder when the Gurait of the village sacrifices a chicken or a goat. This ceremony is also observed on the village level and the sacrificed articles are shared by all present during the

ceremony. The Gurait, however, is the exclusive sharer of the head of the sacrificed goat, which is kept on the sacred centre (Bender Nadu).

There is another sacred centre down below the western end of the village settlement. It is called *Muri Gossaiyan* which is represented by a *Pushre* (Kusum) tree. This sacred centre is worshipped on the village level on the fourth day of Bandna. In the evening a pig is sacrificed by the village Gurait and the Demano under Shamanistic influence goes around the village, collects puffed maize and offers them to the Muri Gossain.

The last, among the permanently located sacred centres is the *Mulā* Gossaiyan which like the *Muri* gossaiyan, is represented by a *Pushre* (Kusum) tree on the northern side of the village at a distance of about 100 yards A hill path running from the centre of the northern margin of the village leads to this sacred centre. Mula gossaiyan is worshipped on the first day of Bandna in the evening when a goat is sacrificed on the village level by the Gurait. Offerings of puffed maize and *Pitha* of maize are also made. These articles are put by every family of the village in a bowl of *sāl* leaf, which are collected at one place in a basket (*Dili*) kept in the village sacred zone (Mānjhiye thān). When every family has put its offerings in the basket it is brought to the *Mula* Gossaiyan by the Gurait. The drum is beaten and the Demano begins his shamanistic dance. Accompained by the villagers, he goes to the Mula Gossaiyan. He continues his shamanistic dance there and after some time he sits on a *Machli* (a ritualistic small chair) and receives the offerings of the *Dili* (Basket).

In addition to the above sacred centres located either within the village settlement or within the village boundry, there are a few objects right in the hut of a Maler of Benderi which on sacred occasions become sacred centres for the members living in the hut. The Maler of Benderi identify *Addo*, (hut) *Gomo* (Pillar) and *Atto* (hearth) Gossaiyan and make occasional offerings in the name of these Gossaiyan. The Addo Gossaiyan (The hut god) represented by the *Bali* (door) is worshipped when the yield from the field is brought home. The Addo Gossaiyan is also worshipped when a new hut is constructed and a sacrifice of a goat or a pig is made on this occasion. Taddi is also offered. On the other occasion, however, the offerings of a fowl and a cup of Taddi are considered sufficient. The *Gomo Gossaiyan* (pillar of the house) is worshipped with vermilion marks and offering of a fowl when the bunches of maize ears are hung on the pillars inside the hut. It is also believed that if the *Gomo* Gossai-

yan may bring health and happiness to the family members by keeping away the evil effects of the evil spirits. Similarly the Atto gossaiyan which is represented by the hearth is also worshipped with vermilion and blood of a fowl when the first corn of the harvest is cooked on it.

In addition to the above representation of Gossaiyan in the hut, the villagers also believe in another gossaiyan known as *Sahar* (cow shed) gossaiyan. The Sahar gossaiyan is believed to live in the cattle shed and is worshipped by the head of the family to protect the cattle from being harmed by the supernatural power, wild beasts and theft. Offerings of a chicken with rice and sundur (vermilion) are made to the Sahar Gossaiyan whenever considered necessary.

Besides these common domestic sacred centres, some families may have some special sacred centres inside or near the hut. The Demano Rama of Benderi, for example, had a special sacred centre represented by a small wooden design. This sacred centre is worshipped by him with the belief that it gives him power for shamanistic performances. Occasional offerings of fowl's blood, *Tāddi*, *Sundur*, puffed maize and *arwa* rice are made.

Some Gossaiyan, namely *Beru* (sun), *Bilpo* (moon), *Bindke* (stars) are represented by their actual symbols in the sky. Beru gossaiyan is considered to be the supreme gossaiyan by the Maler of the village Benderi, though no specific and special worship or sacrifices are made to it. The Bipla Gossaiyan comes next to the Beru Gossaiyan in the hierarchy of Gossaiyan and no special worship is also ascribed to it. Bindke (stars) and other Gossaiyan have been ranked together in the hierarchy of the Gossaiyan at Benderi. All these are considered to be the most benevolent Gossaiyans of the Maler.

Temporary Representation of sacred Centres

The sacred geography of the Maler of Benderi is mainly reflected through the permanant sacred centres, found in the hut, in and around the village, and above the sky. There are, however, several Gossaiyans which are either temporarily represented or are never represented by any objects. Among those sacred centres which are temporarily enshrined, mention may be made of the *Charka Gossaiyan.*

When a village suffers from the epidemic of small pox, it worships this gossaiyan after the epidemic comes to an end. The villagers make a wooden frame to represent the Charka Gossaiyan.

The complex wooden frame representing Charka Gossaiyan is made with two wooden pillars approximately 20 feet high with a diameter of one feet in thickness which are joined by a horizontal pillar. The Charka Gossaiyan is worshipped on the village level and the main ritual consists of sacrificing of a cow by the Guruit (not by the Manjhiye) and of pouring of the sacrificial blood at the bottom of the two pillars.

Among these important Gossiayan of Benderi which are not represented by any material object, mention may be made of *Errek Pahari* and *Sima* Gossaiyan. The *Errek* Gossaiyan is worshipped by the Guru (the village diviner) when he has cured a person of snake (Neru) or scorpion (Tele) bites On this occasion, in addition to Errek Gossaiyan, the supreme Gossaiyan (Beru Gossaiyan) of the Maler and the Mahadeo (the Hindu god of serpent) are also worshipped. The Pahari Gossaiyan (hill god) is believed to be the protector of the life and crops on the hills. It is worshipped in the month of Aghan (Oct.–Nov.) by sacrificing chicken and goat or pig, with the belief that the Pahari Gossaiyan would be pleased to yield good harvest and protect them from death and diseases The *Sima* devi is believed to live on the four boundaries of the village, and she is worshipped on the village level by making offerings of a chicken with rice and vermilion usually in the month of Kartik (Sept.–Oct.). Through this worship they try to drive away the diseases out of the boundary of the village and usually this worship is performed either on the eastern boundary or on the southern boundary near the spring.

Thus, the sacred geography of the village Benderi extends in and around the village and also above the village in the sky. The villagers are surrounded on all sides on the earth and the sky with sacred centres, on whose will depends the life and death, happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, health and disease, prosperous harvest and starvation for the villagers. With these Gossaiyan, as has been mentioned above, the evil spirits also occupy a prominent place in the sacred geography at Benderi.

The villagers identify some of the trees, stones, streams or pond or some such other places around the village as the abode of evil spirits (Alchi or Bhute). The most prominent place for the abode of the Bhut is the *Mari* or Masani (Burial place) on the eastern end of the village settlement. The villagers believe that some of the dissatisfied ancestral spirits become Alchi. They live in the Masani and may attack anybody who happen to pass alone by the

side of the *Mari* or after the darkness. The villagers, both adult and young, are afraid of this place and no body dare enter the Masani for fear of being caught by the Alchi. The Masani of the village is a place of great awe and it wields frightening influence on the minds of the villagers.

The second set of evil spirits (Alchi or bhut) is called Dindi which live on trees mainly on mango tree. The villagers conceive it to be a male bhute which mainly attacks the female of the village There were several large sized mango trees which were considered to be the abode of *Dindi* bhute When a Dindi bhute catches a women the Guru finds out the whereabouts of that bhute and the sacrifices of the goat and chicken are made under that very tree to drive away the bhute. The rituals followed here are also more or less the same as in the case of the worship of the *Gossaiyan*, however, the utterances made by the Guru are different meaning thereby "Bhute, go to your place, leave the person, we are giving you food (goat chicken, puffed maize and bread of Maize).

The third bhute which is identified by the villagers at Benderi is *Jame Bhute* who is also believed to be a male. It, however, catches both male and female, and if it catches an infant, it is (infant) sure to die immediately. This bhute lives on the stones outside the village including in the Khalle land. When somebody is caught by this bhute, the Guru finds out the place where the bhute has attacked the person and the sacrifices are offered to it on the same stone. In order to drive away this bhute black chicken and black pigeon are offered with the belief that to a bhute living on the black stone, the offerings of the black objects will be preferred.

The fourth and the last type of bhute is *Amnarah* or *Amki bhute* (river bhute) which lives on some spots of the stream. This bhute may attack both male and female. When any person becomes ill and shivers, it is suspected by the Guru that he or she has been caught by Amki bhute. In case the attack is mild, offerings of puffed maize and bread are considered adequate and in case the attack is stronger, sacrifices of a black chicken is also made. All these sacrificial materials are thrown in water where the *Amki bhute* is supposed to live. The offerings are made with the following utterances by the Guru :—

"Amki bhute Errakku Labanchim pitanchiny, kherechimu, Hinandeki Nektraku" meaning thereby "Bhute" I am giving you bread and chicken etc. Do not attack the person further, leave him.

Sacred performances

The above description of sacred geography and of the beliefs of the Maler in different types of spirits—*Gossaiyan Giwe Urkkya*, Bhute and the Chergani has acquainted us with the strong belief of the Maler in a system of religion which may be called spiritism. The pacification of the various types of spirits are reflected in a series of ritual, worship, and sacrifices which, taken collectively, may be termed sacred performances. The present section will be devoted to a typological study of the types of sacred performances observed by the Maler of Benderi.

As with the study of sacred geography we noted that the Maler conception about the Gossaiyan, and other supernatural power is vague and mixed similarly in their sacred performances the sacred and secular activities, the religious sacrifices and festivals, and above all the rhythm of the economic operations and many of the sacred performances are all tied up and go side by side. If a series of gossaiyans are worshipped during the Bandna and the Maler observe fast before the ancestors are given food, it is followed by equally very secular acts of dancing, drinking and free sex-mating. The agricultural operation of Khallu cultivation is marked with religious rituals at regular intervals. Owing to all these, it becomes difficult to make exclusive categories of the sacred performances and the present attempt is just to give a generalised picture of the important aspects of sacred performances with a view to understand them as a part of the Maler religion.

In general, the main sacred performance of the Maler is to offer some sacrifice to the Gossaiyan or to the ancesters or to the *Bhute*. The sacrifice ranges from the buffalo to the eggs. If one observes the cycles of Maler rituals and festivals, he notices the sacrifices being made both on the village as well as on the family levels. The sacrifices of the expensive animals are usually done on the village levels while the sacrifices of fowls and pigeons or of small calves or pigs or goats are normally made on the family level. The expensive animals like buffalo, cow and large sized calf and pig are purchased by subscription raised from all the families of the village. Last year, for example, a buffalo worth Rs. 240/- was purchased for sacrifice in which every family contributed Rs. 5/- and while the four traditional village officers namely the *Sardar, Sardar's brother, Surja* Naib and Mesa Naib contributed Rs. 6/- per head. The villagers also remember that about three years ago, a buffalo worth Rs. 400/- was sacrificed. The sacrifice of cow is similarily made at Benderi mainly in the name of *Chal Nadu*. At *Chal Nadu* and

Amte Gossaiyan sacred centres, it has been observed that the individual sacrifices of the family are followed by large scale sacrifice at the village level. On many other occasions as well, the sacrifice of fowl or pigeon or goat by the head of the family are followed by the sacrifice of calf or large sized pig or cow by the village sacred specialists Manjhiye or the Gurait on the village level. The Maler in making these sacrifices on the family and village levels believe that the first type of sacrifice is essential for the welfare of the respective family and the latter for the welfare of the village as a whole. Some scholars (Sarkar : 1938 : 97) consider the Maler religion essentially individualistic and attribute the communal worship to be of later intrusion. The present data from Bendeu and Tetuli reveal to us that both types of worships are equally important and in many cases they are inseparable. At Tetuli, we note that the major *Pije* (worships and sacrifices) like Gangi, Khosre, and Bhoje are observed firstly collectively at the village level and then individually at the family level. On many occasions we have noted the level of integration at the family level but on the ritualistic level the welfare of the village as a whole looms large in the mind of the Maler and the sacrifices on the community level appear to be first stage of integration at the village level.

The idea behind the sacrifice of fowls and animals among the Maler seems to be very interesting. All their spirits, good or evil, are non-vegetarian and expect sacrifices of certain life and life's blood for their pacification. We have noted during our field enquiry that the size of animals to be sacrificed (they use the term 'Give') in the name of certain Gossaiyan depend upon the happiness of particular families and then of the entire village. The happiness is to be measured in terms of the rich Khallu harvest and lack of incidence of death and disease in the families in particular and the village in general It was seriously said by Rama Mesa that the Khallu Gossaiyan does not deserve any big sacrifice as the yield from Khallu land has been very poor. He, further commented that last year sacrifice of Buffalo on the village level as also sacrifices of several big pigs were given to the Gossaiyan as the harvest was really rich.

The Maler of Bendari believe that the blood of the sacrificial animals is sacred as it pacifies the good and evil spirits living in and around the village. The efficacy of the blood depends upon the size of the sacrificed animals. We have noted above that blood of sacrificed animals and fowls are shed on the symbols of the Gossaiyan and in case of Charka Gossaiyan the blood of sacrificed cow is collected in an earthen pitcher and is poured at the bottom of the

symbolic pillars. In order to appease the Dinde bhute, again the blood of the sacrificed goat is put in an earthen vessel and is left at the sacred centre with the belief that the Dandi bhute drinks the blood. We have also noted that the head of the sacrificed animals, in most of the cases are kept by the sacrificers on the sacred centres

Regarding the Maler cult of blood, one of their taboos deserve special mention here. The women are considered to be impure for ritualistic purposes and are not allowed to attend any sacred performances especially because they are the source of "impure blood" during the menstrual period. The menstruating wives, further, became the cause of pollution for their husbands for whom it also becomes taboo to participate in the ritualistic sacrifices of the village or of any family.

It is a very important taboo inflicted on the women according to which it is strictly prohibited for them even to touch the sacred objects that would be offered to the Gossaiyan. Even the family Gossaiyan (Addo, Gommo, Atto) are not worshipped by them and wherever Jhanda Gossaiyan is attached to the hut (not at Benderi, but at Garhsingla, Nirbhitta and Kachna Surajbera) it is tabooed for the women to go near that corner of the hut The women never go to the sacred zone of the village and while accompanying the funeral procession they stop much before the *Masani* zone. They never eat the sacrificial meat which is normally cooked by the male members outside the village settlement.

They, however, may observe the major sacrifices made in village sacred zone from a distance, and actively participate in the secular aspect of the performances i e in eating, drinking and dancing. All these pollution on the part of the women is interpreted in terms of her biological quality of menstruation which is a source of impure blood.

The second important item to be offered to the spirits, good and evil, is the various forms of maize. As the Maler, invariably are non vegetarian and consider their spirits also to be non-vegetarian, similarly the Maler, next to blood and meat, consider maize to be sacred. On almost all the ritual occasions, after the sacrifice of certain fowl or animals or both, usually the offerings of *taddi* (preparation of beverage made usually of maize) are made. Taddi is a great sacrificial object and its offering to the spirits as well as to the guests on the occasions of feast that follow are very essential. The next preparation of maize which is usually offered to the spirits is puffed maize. Next to it, come preparations of bread and cake (*Pitha*)

made out of maize. The Maler consider the offerings of the preparations of maize as an inevitable item on ritual occasions as their entire economy revolves round maize. A moral man is he who produces maize and makes its offerings on suitable occasions to the various types of spirits who have been good enough to give them harvest. Maize is not only a sacred ingredient for making offerings, it becomes a symbol of worship itself when it is ready for harvesting. The ritual performance, observed on the eve of harvesting of maize is called *Gāngi* Pijje which literally means, the Maize worship[9].

In addition to the above offerings of blood, liquor and maize-food, the other offerings that the Maler of Benderi occasionally make are vermilion (*Sundrā*) *arwa* rice, flowers and garlands. At Tetuli we noted the offerings of betel leaves and betel nuts have been also included perhaps owing to the Hindu influence.

While making the above offerings suitable utterances are also made by the sacrificers. In case of the sacred performances made by a family, the head of the family propitiates the respective Gossaiyan or ancestors and invokes their blessings and good wishes for the health, happiness and rich harvest of the family members. When the Manjhiye or the Gurait makes such a sacrifice, he also invokes and makes suitable utterances seeking the blessings and mercy of the respective Gossaiyan for prosperity, health and happiness of the village. The analysis of these utterances made on different occasions reveal that they especially invoke the Gossaiyan to save them and their villagers, from death and disease and grant them rich yield and protect them by wild animals and other natural calamities.

On some occasions the above offerings are associated with the Shamanistic performances of the *Dewāno* or the *Devāssi*. The performances of the Dewano are indicated at Benderi by one single term, "*Jhupna*" which literally means the swinging of the body under the influence of the spirits The roles of the Dewano are especially very prominent when some rituals related to the dead ancestors are to be observed. On all the four days of the Bandna festival, for example, the village Dewano, Rama, continues to remain more or less under shamanistic influence, and has many roles to perform under the influence of the spirits, mention of which have been made in detail elsewhere. The Demano on these occasions unders the shamanistic influence transforms himself to be an ancestor and his utterances are taken to be the pious wish of the spirit of an ancestor. His oracles are seriously taken and obeyed. At Benderi, among many things we also recorded that owing to his oracle the sacred

functions of the Manjhiye, Rama (also Sardar), were transferred to another person Dibru on the ground that the Gossaiyan refused to accept the sacrifices made by the former and liked Dibru to make the sacrifices.

The other type of sacred performances are reflected in the administration of *Telpatta* (Oil-leaf) and application of *Jhar Phook* (spell-blow) by the *Guru*. Whenever, any person falls ill, the *Guru* administers *Telpatta* to know the cause of a disease. This performance is confined to the *Guru* who is the diviner of the village. On accepting a fees varying from 0·50 N. P. to Re. 1/-, the *Guru* makes this performance to know the cause of disease or death of a particular individual. He takes leaves of *Sal* or *Bansh* (Bamboo) or *Sarifa* and puts a few drops of mustard oil on a particular leaf. He moves his indicating finger very carefully on the leaf and utters spells which are inaudible to the others. He, firstly, takes the names of the different Gossaiyan, moves his finger on the leaf, utters the spells, and then stops, and closely makes a search for a black spot on the leaf. If he finds out such a black spot (which only he can see), he identifies the death or disease caused by that particular Gossaiyan. In case he does not find out the black spot after naming all the Gossaiyan, he tries with the bhutes (evil-spirit), then with the witches and lastly with the God of snake and scorpion (Nehru Gossaiyan) till he associates a black spot on the leaf with a particular spirit. This process of diagnosing the cause of disease and death is known as *Telpatta* (oil and leaf) which is the traditional and the most popular devise to know about the disease or death.

The Maler diviner (Guru) also cures the affected person by administering *Jhar phook*. This process involves the invoking of the specific spirit or spirits, making sacrifices in the name of the spirits and asking him to be pacified. While uttering spells, he, sometimes, requests it, sometimes expresses anger and sometimes, specially in the case of evil spirits or witches he also commands and directs the spirit to leave the affected person. While applying *Telpatta* or administering *Jharphook*, the *Guru* is left almost alone only attended by the elderly male members of the respective family. In addition to the above religious and magical performances, the diviner also gives herbs for the cure of the disease.

The other type of sacred performance, again on a restricted basis, is reflected in the divine ordeals and oath, reference to which has been made elsewhere (Vidyarthi 1961 B). When, a person is accused in the eyes of the other family members or the villagers, as the case may be, he or she is brought to the village sacred zone

(*Manjhi Than*) and is asked to take an oath in the name of one of the powerful Gossaiyan. The Maler believe that he or she who tells a lie after taking a false oath in the name of the Gossaiyan, he suffers from bad disease and may face death. In case of women the leaking of salt and in case of a man, leaking of red-hot iron-axe are the popular ordeal prevalent at Benderi. These are the effective supernatural devices to establish guilt or innocence of a woman or man in case of especially pre-marital or extra-marital relationships. When a woman or a man refuses to accept her or his guilt, she or he is asked to undergo the ordeals. The woman is brought to the Manjhiye than and is asked to leak salt or to accept the guilt. It is strongly believed that if she leaks the salt in a false case, she would die. For the fear of death, we came across several cases, of confession of the guilt. The ordeal of "Saveli" which consists of the leaking of red hot iron by suspected person is held near a brook outside the village The sacred specialists—the Manjhiye, the Gurait and some other elderly persons attend to the Saveli. An axe (Masu) is placed in the fire of *sal* wood and when it is red like fire, the person is asked to remove all clothes except a little left on the hip, and then he seats before the red axe with his knees and hands on the rocky ground. In this pose he leaks the red axe five times. If the axe does not affect the tongue, he is considered innocent and he offers a hen which is sacrificed by the Gurait in the village Manjhiye than. In case, he fails to leak the axe or his tongue is burnt, he has to pay the penality as fixed by the village council. More than five cases of saveli were recorded at Bendri.

The above sacred performances are essentially solemn situation of worship (Erwe or Pijje) and sacrifices. They are esssentially ritualistic performances which are, as a matter of fact, external expression of their beliefs. But these rituals are also followed by the *lighter* aspects of the Maler life which consist of feast and enjoyment, drink and dance, and then in some cases of free sexual mating. These are essentially secular aspects of the Maler festivals.

The Maler sacred performances, thus, combine in themselves sacred and secular aspects, and it is clearly reflected from the analysis of the main sacred performances of Bandna at Benderi. The Bandana lasts for four days annually and we have noted it above while discussing sacred centres. The different Maler Gossaiyan are worshipped and suitable sacrifices with suitable rituals and offerings are made on all the four days. But on the same days, the mirth and merriment, the drink and dance, feasts and free mating mark the Maler dull and dreary life to the extent that the Maler youth always

long for the days of Bandna in their own village as well as in the neighbouring villages.

The peculiar combination of the hours of tense worship and sacrifices of the spirits on the one hand, fun and feast on the other, in general, appear to be very dramatic ways of changing scene. To an outsider, however, the fun, feast, drink and dance and drums are more conspicuous than the really solemn and tense hours of worships of the spirits.

To the Maler in general, as well, Bandna is more awaited for the feast, drink and dance. The calendar for the observance of Bandna is arranged in such a cyclic order that may enable the villagers to attend the drink and dance to be performed in different villages falling within a radius of about ten miles. I had an occasion to observe the Bandna festival at Benderi in March 1956, where I noted a large assemblage of the boys and girls, adult and old persons of the neighbouring villages who came to participate in the Bandna festival of Benderi. The population of the village multiplied by more than five times and each hut was flooded with relatives coming from the neighbouring villages located within the radius of about 10 miles[10]. The village put on a jubilant appearance and all the semi-nacked Maler were in their best colourful dresses. The woman, specially the girls were very nicely-clad and were almost covered with ornaments. The boys equally were well-dressed, put on garlands and hung wooden combs in their hair. They were all drunk and were dancing with all joy and jubilation.

They continued to dance for the whole day and then till late in the night. This is the period which is also noted for courtship and for the selection of girls for marriage. This is the period when old friends of youth dormitories meet with their heart open during or after the dance in the night. They have safe place all around the village to meet and mix freely or closely with each other.

Bandna, thus along with the sacrifices to the Gossaiyan and festivities to the relatives, also marks the days of sexual laxity, courtship and selection of spouses. The biographies of the Maler youth and adult are full with statements that indicate the anxious awaiting of the Maler youth for attending Bandna in different villages and meet the girl friends of their choice.

The Sacred specialists :

As the sacred performances so the sacred specialists in the Benderi village may be considered both at the family and village levels. When a sacrifice is to be made on the family level, the head

of the family himself becomes the sacred specialist as the Gossaiyan accept any offering made by him. The head of the family has, however, to make it sure that his wife is not in the menstrual period when he is giving a sacrifice or is making an offering.

On the village level, the *Manjhiye* is considered to be a village priest and in him he combines both the sacred and the secular powers. From the religious points of view he makes all the major sacrifices and is in-charge of all the religious responsibilities. It is the duty of the Manjhiye to maintain healthy relationship between the commoners and the spirits by making timely sacrifices on behalf of the villagers. It is his responsibility to fix-up the dates for the various agricultural and social sacrifices and festivals. It is for him to decide with the help of the *Guraits* and other elder members the nature of sacrifice for a particular spirit on a particular occasion. It is his responsibility to raise subscription for the purchase of a sacrificial animals and to see that all the traditions and rituals regarding the sacrifices are properly observed by the villagers. The Manjhiye of Benderi, thus, performs all the religious functions concerning the village and is first among the religious specialists.

He again is the custodian to see that the traditions and customs of the villages are observed by the people. He, with the help of the Gurait and other members of the Village Council discusses the breach of the customary laws and irreligious acts of the villagers. In such cases the matters regarding pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationship, divorce and desertion, and such other breach of traditions are mainly decided. The Manjhiye keeps all the sacrifical weapons like Tarwari (sword), Tatro (sickles), and Parsa (axe) in his own hut and protects them from the evil spirits by giving occasional offerings. On the occasions of worship and sacrifices the Manjhiye, as the religious head, has to perform many functions in addition to the actual sacrifices. When the Mangarwin (Buffalo sacrifice) is to be performed, he accommodates all the willing secondary sacrifices in his hut so that they may not touch the body of a woman. He also provides them with sacrificial drink. On the occasions of some sacrifices, he also observes fast and undergoes ritual bath before the sacrifice is made. When a marriage is to be performed, he has also some ritualistic duties to perform.

The office of a Manjhiye in Benderi as in other Maler villages is hereditory. When a Manjhiye dies or retires owing to illness or such other reasons, his eldest son or the nearest male relatives, in case when a Manjhiye dies issueless, succeeds him. The eldest son of the Manjhiye being the potential Manjhiye gets training in the religious

functions from his father since his very childhood. He learns the details about the sacred centres and performances, about the nature of spirits, and types of sacrifices, and thus becomes the custodian as well as the chief transmitter of the village traditions from generation to generation.

The Manjhiye, however, is one among the common villagers in so far as his economic and social activities are concerned. He, like the other villagers work in the khallu land and in the forest for earning his livelihood. He freely mixes with the people and establish marriage relationship with any Maler family of the village or outside without any special consideration of his status. The only status that he enjoys may be considered in terms of his sacred and secular functions. *Here also he is closely assisted by the village Gurait and* other elders.

Next to Manjhiye is the village Gurait who essentially is the assistant to the Manjhiye. When a sacred performance or sacrifice is to be made, the Gurait collects the subscriptions from the villagers and makes all preparations to help the Manjhiye in performing the sacrifices. On some occasions, when minor sacrifices on village level are to be made, it is usually performed by the Gurait. The Gurait is the exclusive sacrificer for the sacred centres like the *Muri* and the *Mulā* Gossaiyan and the sacrifices and offerings are made exclusively by him. *The Manjhiye does not come in picture when the sacrifices* are to be made for these sacred centres. Similarly while worshipping the Bender Nadu or Tuddu Nadu the sacrifice is exclusively made by the Gurait.

On other occasions, as the assistant of the Manjhiye, the Gurait makes minor sacrifices of a fawl or a goat or a pig while the major sacrifices of a cow or a calf or a buffalo are made or initiated by the Manjhiye. On the occasion of the marriage, the sacrifice of *Bandi* pig (pig received in bride-price) is made by the Gurait. On the occasion of death the Gurait climbs on the roof of the hut of the deceased and beats drum with a view to break the sad news to the villagers. He also goes to the neighbouring villages to communicate the news of the death to the relatives and invites them to join the funeral procession.

At Benderi there were three Gurait to perform the above functions. On enquiry we came to know that about 50 years ago the population of the village was about four times more than the present one and the village required more than one Gurait (see biography of Rupa's Mother). As the office of the Gurait is hereditory the three Guraits are still being succeeded though they do not have much work

to do owing to the successive decrease in the number of families from 240 to 80 and now to 37 families.

In addition to the above two sacred specialists, the Dewano may be taken to be another sacred specialist of Benderi. We have noted the roles that Dewano Rama plays specially at the time of ancestors' worship or at the time of the worship of the Gossaiyan related to the dead ancestors. On these occasions he is possessed by the spirits, makes shamanistic performances, pronounce oracles and accepts offerings in he names of ancestors and Gossaiyans. The office of Dewano is not hereditory like that of the Manjhiye or the Gurait. When the villagers see any person possessed by supernatural power or recognises certain support from the spirits, he is selected as a Dewano. At Benderi there are two persons, *Guddu Rama* and *Surja* who are Demano. At Tetuli one Basu Rama is the village Dewano or Demano.

For all economic and social purposes, Guddu Rama is one among the other villagers He is not distinguishable from the other villagers in so far as his normal behaviour is concerned. However when the sacred occasions come, he becomes completely different from the others. On some other times as well, he may be overpowered by some spirits and may communicate their wish. The villagers, in general, are quite aware of his shamanistic activities and, they reported to me about his shamanistic activities with smiles.

The fourth type of sacred specialist that we came across at Benderi is Guru who is said to know the details about the good and bad spirits. The Guru, as we have noted earlier, is both a diviner and a medicant. He is diviner in the sense that through the application of *Telpattā*, he finds out the cause of disease or death and then through his spells and suitable sacrifices he drives away the *Bhute* and appease the Gossaiyan He is a medicant in the sense that he knows the names of suitable herbs and treat the ailing persons by providing these herbs to them.

A Guru has to learn about divination and medicine from some other person. One who wants to receive training, he contacts some reputed Guru of his locality, wins his confidence and thus becomes his trainee. The training period may continue even for several years. Sometimes, a trainee may get partial training either as a diviner or as a doctor. While a trainee, the person gives occasional gifts of rice, money, pigeon, goat, fowl etc. to his guru. The Guru takes him to the forests and teaches him about the herbs. He takes him to observe his (Gurus) actual performances for the practical training.

At Benderi Sundra Guru got his long training in divination and

medicine under a Santhal Guru of Pathalgatta. He is sober and serious, and generally does not mix freely with the villagers. A person of relatively long stature with slender built body and long hair, he really gives a look of a diviner and gets all respects from the villagers. Economically, however, he is not at all distinguishable from the other villagers, though he has learnt the art of making plough from a Santhal and earns some money by selling it in the Santhal villages and the local weekly market.

The other man, Javara is also considered to be a Guru of the village. He is a young man of about 30 years and he is said to know the names of herbs, and is consulted at the time of illness. He has got training from a Paharia Guru of Bhatbhanga. He had to give a goat to the Guru when he started learning about the medicine.

The fifth and the last type of person who is concerned with divinity is the *Alchi* (or witch) The Alchi is usually noted for her malivolent supernatural power and is said to cause harm both to man and to property. She learns about this craft secretly under some trained person. The witch of Benderi, Rami is said to have got her training under a Santhal witch and she is said to have offered the life of her husband for her perfection in witchcraft. Rami as mentioned earlier is very much feared in the village, and villagers avoid her because of her power for doing evils. Her black magic is counteracted by the divination of the village Guru.

Thus the above description of the religious beliefs and practices of the Maler of Benderi brings out that religion of the village can be understood in terms of the three analytic concepts—sacred geography sacred performances and sacred specialists, The three aspects of the Maler religion, concieved collectively might be termed "sacred complex". Considered culturally the sacred complex of Benderi is little traditional (Redfield : 1955) and structurally it is exclusively of local importance. All the sacred centres of the village are located within the four boundaries of the village, the sacred performances are mainly observed by the villagers and the sacred specialists have their jurisdiction limited to the village.

The sacred complex of the village further reflects its relationship with the habitat, economy and society of the Maler. The sacred centres, for example, are represented by the stones, wild trees, streams or wooden frames on the earth ; and the sun, the moon and the stars above on the sky. The sacred performances mark the occasion of agricultural operations or of annual ancestor worship and the offerings primarily compose of objects like meat, blood, liquor, and preparations of maize. The Gossaiyan are non-vegetarian as the

Maler themselves are, and accept food that are locally available in abundance. The motives in making these performances are also simple. Some sacrifices are meant for appeasing the spirits so that they may get rid of disease and harmful effect. Some sacrifices are meant for ensuring rich harvest and for protecting them from disease and death. The sacred specialist of a Maler village is again a specialist in a restricted sense. With his own economic activities, a Manjhiye or a Gurait or a Dewano or a Guru has some sacred work associated with him, which he performs when the occasions come. The local traditions or the possession by spirits or his own capability have made him acceptable to the villagers as a sacred specialists.

Then, from the above description, it is also evident that the sacred complex of a village wields a powerful influence in regulating the Man-Nature and the Man to Man relationship in a folk community. The conception of the Maler about the Gossaiyan or the other spirits, their series of sacrifices to please or appease them to ensure health, happiness and harvest in the village, then to act according to the oracle or shamanistic proclamation of the Dewano or the Guru and then their faith in oaths and ordeals bring out their influence on the socio-economic actions.

Incidentally the description of the sacred complex of the Maler village also brings out the probable influence that the plain tribe, the Santhal and the Hindus of the regions have been able to exercise on it. In general, it is evident that the Santhal have influenced the Maler sacred complex more than the Hindus. The Maler have given alternate Santhali terms for some of their sacred centres and performances (Manjhiye Than, Bandna etc.), they have learnt dances and songs from them, and some of them have got training in divination or witchcraft from them. Among the Hindu deities, the Maler Guru of Benderi offers worship also to Mahadeo if a serpent bites a Maler. The Maler villagers also go to attend the two Hindu festivals of Durgapuja and Deepawali in the plains and actively associate with the observances by dancing in groups. At Tetuli, the low hilly village, the influence of the Hindu was more marked than Benderi, as we noted that betel and betel nuts, are also included in the offerings. In general, however, the Maler in comparison to the other tribes, continue to maintain the exclusiveness of their sacred complex.

NOTE

1 The present paper is the part of a larger work of the author on the Maler hilly tribe, which is to be published in shape of a monograph. In this work, the author has attempted to study the Maler Culture in terms of Nature-Man-Spirit structure. This paper on the sacred complex of a Maler

village is a section of the third part of his monograph, the other two parts being on Nature and Man.

2. The Maler live in small villages (15 to 30 families) mainly located on the hills of the northern portion of the Santhal Paraganas. The height of the hills varies from 900′ to 100′ from the local surface. The hills are usually covered with the luxuriant growth of deciduous forests which usually provide suitable place for the slash and burn cultivation, locally known as *Khallu* or Kurwa cultivation. The village, Benderi located at a height of about 800 ft. on a forested hill near Boreo Police Station in Santhal Paragana consists of 22 families. The main economic activities of the villagers revolve round the Khallu or slash and burn cultivation. The present village was chosen for intensive investigation owing to its typical characteristics.

3. The present author has formulated and used these terms "sacred complex", "sacred geography", "sacred centre," "sacred performances" and sacred specialists originally to describe the ethnography of the sacred city of Gaya. In the study of the "Sacred Complex" in Gaya, the author found it culturally to be "great traditional" and structually of civilizational importance Here the "sacred complex" of Benderi is essentially little traditional and is of local importance. They can be fruitfully compared and contrasted. Redfield (1955),

4. The author stayed in the Maler villages during the Puja vacation in the year 1954 and 1955 and, he camped with the Post-graduate students for one month in 1956 and six weeks in 1959. He has always been in touch with the Maler since 1955. The author also takes the opportunity of acknowledging with thanks the helps that he received in the field from his students who accompanied him to the field Some of the data collected by Sri Sarkar De, and Sri B. N. Sahay on the religion has been especially helpful in writing this paper.

5. At Benderi, the Jhandā Gossaiyan represented by a bamboo was collectively, located at one place. At Tetuli, Garsingla, Nirbitha etc , however, each hut was accompanied by this "*Jhandā* Gossaiyan "

6. Literally means "Oil and leaf " The village diviner applies oil on a Sal leaf with a view to find out the name of the spirit that has caused disease or death to any individual. For detail see section on sacred performance.

7. This is a term which is used to indicate the spells and other devices that the village diviner use to relieve a Maler individual from the evil influences of the spirit. For detail see the section on the sacred performances.

8. One of the huts is owned by Rama who was the hereditary Manjhiye of the village. But owing to the shamanistic will of the Dewano, he had been removed from this office and his cousin Dibru has been made a Manjhiye. The former Manjhiye has left this hut located near the Manjhiyethan and now lives in a different hut near his *dam* land.

9. The Maler observes *Gangi Pijje* and *Khosre Pijje* on the eve of harvesting of maize and beans respectively. In general the sacrifices are made firstly on the village level, and then it is followed by each family of the village. The sacrifice of a hen or a goat or a pig is made by the heads of the families in their respective Khallu or Bagri lands to be harvested.

10. A rough estimate shows that last year about 400 persons from twelve villages came to attend the Taddi or Bandna festival at Benderi. The names of the villages, with the approximate distance and number of persons are given in the following table ;

Table

Approximate number of persons from other villages attending *Taddi or Bandana festival at Benderi* last year (1958)

Sl. No.	Names of the villages.	Distance from Benderi with direction.	Number of persons at ended the Taddi Festivals.
1.	Pandan	6 m. S.	20 Persons
2.	Kunta Pahar	11 m. S.	8 „
3.	Dogra	3 m. E.	150 all except the old.
4.	Koto	3. m. E N.	25 Persons
5.	Dalabari	3. m. E. N.	12 „
6.	Bhatbhanga	4. m. N.	100 (76%)
7.	Digra	3. m. N.	40 persons
8.	Deotikri	6. m N.	5 persons
9.	Bedodada	6 m. N	5 „
10.	Chamdi	6. m. N. E.	12 „
11.	Panik	6. m. W.	5 „
12.	Chapal.	7. m. W.	4 „
		Maximum distance 11 miles.	386

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THE DOUBLE SEX CHARACTER OF THE KHASI GREAT DEITY.

U. R. Ehrenfels

1. Introduction and Scope :

To the concept of goddesses among the Khasi in Central Assam attaches special importance, in view of the fact that this Austroasiatic speaking, agricultural group preserves a matrilineal form of organization as a fairly integrated social system to this day[1], whilst similar society-patterns are disintegrating in south western India; the classical homeland of the matrilineal order[2].

That there are goddesses being worshipped, among the Khasi[3], can as little be doubted, as that the ancestral great-grandmother (*Ka Iawbei*) holds a key-position in Khasi family and clan-tradition[4]. But whether the Khasi goddess is essentially a mother, or whether the ancestral family and clan-mother can be considered as a goddess— these are questions, which to discuss is part of the task before us.

I have been enabled to study this question in the course of field researches in 1949/50, financed by a Grant-in-aid from the Viking Fund Inc., New York which I utilized, with the permission of the University of Madras. To both acknowledgement and gratitude *are now expressed also at this place.*

The dual sex aspect, of the principal deity among the Khasi, will in this connection be also described and its nature compared with Khasi attitudes to masculinity and feminity as such. These attitudes are of some theoretical interest. They are illustrative of the mentality created by, and prevailing in, a matrilineal society. Women play a role, and hold a position, in this Khasi or as in similar other matrilineal societies, which is considerably higher than that held by women of non matrilineal groups in this country. The Khasi matrilineal system, moreover, is less disintegrated than that of most other matrilineal groups in India.

These concepts of changing or double sexual attributes, associated with the principal deity, may suggest comparisons with the *ancestral couple* concept. The double sex-aspects, which will thus come to be disscussed as a typical feature of the principle Khasi deity, is suggestive of the *divine couple* in Hinduism generally and the prevailing South Indian forms of religion in particular. *Special interest attaches to these affinities because there are various*

indications of cultural interrelation (inspite of linguistic, ethnic and other differences), between the matrilineal peoples of Assam and those of south-western India; indications to which I have drawn attention already elsewhere[5] and which therefore need not be repeated here.

2. The Great Deity—A God, or A Goddess ?

P.R.T. Gurdon begins the chapter Religion in his classical description of the Khasi[6] with the following words : "The Khasis have a vague belief in the God the Creator, *U Blei Nong-thaw*, although this deity, owing, no doubt, to the influence of the matriarchate, is frequently given the attribute of the feminine gender, Cf. *Ka'lei*[7] *Synshar*".[8]

It seemed to me at first somewhat incongruous that an outspokenly matrilineal people, such as the Khasi no doubt are, should conceive the principal deity in an almost completely male form Yet that was what my observations seemed to indicate, in full congruence with Gurdon's above quoted statement. There are female spirits, *Ka Ksuid*, and lesser *Ka Blei Umm* and *Ka Khrei* of friendly and threatening character but they do not play the role of a great, principal deity, of a primaeval principal, or creator of first order, even if assuming the important position of clan-goddesses, or perhaps that of a personification of the in-group, as *e.g.* in the standing phrase :

"Ba Hukum Ka Blei Ka Longkur
(According to the order of *the goddess* of the clan),
Ka Blei Ka Longkha.
(*the goddess* of relationship"[9])

The position of this goddess as a secondary, created, though not materially visible (or tangible) entity, is perhaps not so clear as it certainly is in the case of the numerous and frequently worshipped female silvan, river or land-protecting spirits, which to describe in detail, the room to the disposition of this analysis, does not permit. We have thus to confine ourselves to the observation that these "tutelary deities" are not identified with the Great Deity or the Creator Deity by the Khasi and, even if imagined to be of female gender and to be of non-material character, yet cannot be considered as a goddess in the narrower sense of the word, as a Mother-goddess or Magna Mater.

But that there is the concept of a primaeval creator deity, among Khasi, became quite clear to me from convictions, laid down in mythology[10], numerous private conversations, and communications

to this effect, and from standing phrases such as the following thanks giving prayer :

U Blei Trai Kynrad Nongthaw Nongbuh

(Oh) He God Lord Master who creates (and) who places

Hajrong Hatbian Shi Hajar[11] *Nguh.*

above (and) below .—one thousand thenks

But the sex determination of this great Deity appeared to me for a considerable period of my field researches as of male gender, such as it apparently did to Gurdon. The Christianized or Unitarian, among my Khasi informants and Khasi friends, supported this my, as I see it now, wrong conception. I had been under the impression that a male Creator Deity (*U Blei Nongthaw,* indicated in the above quoted thanks-giving exclamation by the first, second and fifth word) is counter balanced by an overwhelmingly important, though human or at the utmost deified ancestress (*Ka Iawbei*),—not by a genuine female deity as such—until I came across an affirmative exclamatory sentence.

U Blei Ka Blei ki lahban tip ja kane

(He God......she God they (who) can know about this).

Here the idea of two distinct deities seemed to be indicated in the use of the plural form of the pronoun *ki* (they) which, however, may also be interpreted as the honorific plural for one subject. This becomes the more plausible, as the word combination : *U Blei-Ka Blei* (literally ' He God—She God) alone, without any addition, is an expression which was explained as an emphatic exclamation, only used by persons faced with a climax in life, that is to say, with a situation which makes one turn to the essence of life ;—not by any means to two individualized deities or personalities. As interpretation of this significant exclamation two aspects of the one deity have been defined by my Khasi informant : *U Blei Nongthaw* (He God creator) and *Ka Blei Synshar* (She God perpetuator). The word *Synshar* is also used in ordinary parlance, as e.g., in *U Nong Synshar* —an administrator, as against an *U Nong Bishar*—a judge.

The parallel use, among Khasi, of the word God (*Blei*), with the definite article of the masculine gender *U*, and that of the feminine gender *Ka*, in these exclamations and formulas roused my doubts in the formerly assumed exclusive masculinity of the Khasi Creator Deity. In pursuance of the study of agricultural ceremonials and of prayers to *Ka Mei Ramew* the "mother" protecting the soil, I came across a prayer which confirmed these doubts in the validity of a systematized discrimination between the (male) creator deity (*U Blei Nongthaw*) and the (female) administrative deity (*Ka Blei Synshar*).

This prayer is here given in the Khasi original and in a translation, kindly composed for me, by Dr. H Lyngdoh, the author of *Ka Niam Khasi*[13].

It used to be uttered before agricultural operations during which the ground was cut, by hoeing :

Nga nguh ngon nga dem Khrup ho ki kjat ksiar kjat rupa jong Phi, Pa Blei, Nongthaw Nongbuh, Mynta ngon ieng ka puh ka dain ka trei ka ktah, phin map phin Sngnisynei ia ka lait ka let ka tam ka duna ka jong nga U Khumbynriew. Sngew sngap ko Mei Ramew hajrong, ko Mei Ramew ha tbian, mynta ba ngan ieng ka puh ka dain halor jong phi. Phin map phin sngew. Synei maphi ia ka lait ka let ka tam ka duna ka jong nga U Symbai 'bynriew. Ka Ri ka bah ka thum ka aibuin aithiang hi ka jong phi, ban biang manga U Symbai bynriew kumba la thaw la buh hok U Pa Blei, ba u la pynshet pynshong halor jong phi.

Dr. Lyngdoh's translation: "I bow, I kneel down to your golden and silver feet (Oh) Father God, Creator (*Nongthaw*) and planner (*Nongbuh*). Now I stand to hoe, to cut to work to touch (*ka trei ka ktah*). As thou hast created, planned me the seed (or: "core") of mankind to work to touch. Thou wilst forgive and have mercy on the commissions and ommissions of myself. Hear Oh Mother *Ramew* (*Mei Ramew*) above (*hajrong*), O Mother *Ramew* below (*Tbian*—i e on the earth, or ground),[13] now that I will stand to cut on thee (*halor jong phi*). You will have mercy on the omissions and commissions of myself, the seed (or: "core") of mankind. The care (*ka Ri*), the carrying (*ka bah*), the keeping on the lap (*ka thum*) and the suckling (*ka aibuin aithiang*) are thine alone. To complete me, the seed (or: "core") of mankind as it was created (by) Father God, (*Pa Blei*)—that has been laid on your shoulders (is your responsibility)."

Though two divine forms are no doubt discernible in this prayer, the parallelism in addressing them, and the similarities of feeling towards them, are also strong.

Among the Pnar, in the Jaintia Hills, many original culture traits persist which are disappearing from the Khasi Hills,—especially in the surrounding of the provincial capital Shillong. There in the Jaintia Hills, I was given the following description of "the principal deity".

Ka Blei ka wa buh ka wa shna ka wa buh

(She God who creates who shapes who puts (the)

mynsen wa buh mynsngaid

(spirit who gives the life essence).

It has there also been explained, to me, that the same formula can be addressed to the male deity (*U Blei*) "because we believe that they are two, male and female". Confirmation has there also been given, independently of the above quoted assertion, that the expression "*U Blei-Ka Blei* is used in very great anxiety", as an appeal to the highest instance that can be approached for help.

The thus created impression of a double conception, among Khasi, of the musculinity, or feminity respectively, in the Great Deity, rather than of a belief in two entirely distinct persons, a male creator deity and a female administrator,—not to speak of the human ancestress; *ka Iabei*—appears to be evidenced by a report, well over half a century old now, which is preserved in the Diary of the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, then Major Peet[14] who described on p. 15 a long conversation which he had with the Lyngdoh of Mawplang "about demons", on November 8th, 1885.

Major Peet seems to have aimed at convincing the Lyndgoh of his, the Major's own views, rather, than at understanding himself the ideas of the old priest, for he says: "though I do not for a minute suppose that I convinced him, I silenced him as regards the lesser gods my argument of course being that the same (sc primaeval) cause produces the same effect all over the world thus proving at least *prima facie* that there is but one supreme power. He (sc. the Lyngdoh) acquiesced in a gentlemanly manner, but asked if I did not believe in a female God or Goddess-*Ka Blei* as well as God *U Blei*". The report goes on to describe the conversations in which the Major's argument was that "if there was a pair the same (sc. ultimate) causes would produce different effects". This apparently roused the Lyngdoh who "said almost in the words of Hermes Asclepios that all things must necessarily be of two sexes," and added that in his opinion, "Khasis ought never to give up their belief in local gods, still he would do so, if ordered by Government, but he would never disbelieve in *Ka Blei* because he (i.e. the Lyngdoh) has lived long and seen that for procreation a female is necessary as well as a male".

From this, as also from our former analysis of the *U Blei Ka Blei* conception of the Khasi, it would appear, that the Magna Mater or "Great Goddess' concept of the Khasi is fused with the Creator God idea into one indivisible, yet sexually differentiated unit. It would be perhaps as misleading to say that there is no Great Goddess, among the Khasi, as to state that she is an independent Magna Mater.

The full understanding of this position requires, I think, a somewhat deeper knowledge of Khasi attitudes to masculinity and feminity, as evidenced in every day life and linguistic application. These attitudes will, at the same time, illustrate an influence which the matrilineal order of society can exercise on psychological structure generally.

3 Masculinity and Feminity in Khasi Attitudes .

The particular Khasi attitude in the sex determination of their Great Deity, will, I think, be better understood, if backed by some insight into the role which the sexes play in Khasi psychology. Though a discussion of this theme might well fill a voluminous book, without yet being exhaustive, a few remarks on Khasi attitudes to masculinity and feminity, as such, and their place in every day Khasi parlance may help our analysis at this point.

It is hardly any more necessary, in this second half of the twentieth century, to dispel 19th century's theories about matrilineal societies, decrying them as "savage survivals" or "primitive stages" in human civilization, allegedly based on the assumed (but nowhere actually existing ignorance) of the biological significance of paternity, even though such antiquated theories of anthropological speculation continue to be reproduced, occasionally, by theorists of sister sciences who conveniently ignore the results of seventy years intensive anthropological field-research work and theory.

The father as such, and the male sex generally, play a well defined and very important rôle also in Khasi,—as in all other matrilineal societies.

An English educated Khasi described the Khasi family to me as a small republic in which the father looks after daily problems, the mother provides the centre and performs the important duty of preparing and placing the leaves for the family-offerings and sacrifices, whilst the maternal uncle takes care of special and legal problems. "These three make a nice durbar", added my informant In this family-council the male element thus appears here numerically stronger than it is in the patriarchal family, but, by being represented through two individuals (father and maternal uncle), it is prevented from wielding dictatorial power, to which it frequently tends by temperament. A privileged position is alloted to the mother who, as a woman, is in many ways the weekest of the three authoritative personalities and yet holds a legally privileged key position in this "family-republic". This is an arrangement which tends to infuse respect for the tender qualities, rather, than for mere brutal power

and strength. All members of the matrilineal nuclear republic are under this influence I found this description borne out by detailed family studies which I conducted in the village Maw Syn Jri (Kharang), in 1950.

Another misleading extreme in the evaluation and description of matrilineal societies, of which even some modern anthropologists do not seem altogether free is the trend to minimize and thus to underestimate the rôle which womanhood generally, and individual women in particular, are playing in matrilineal societies, as long as the matrilineal organization continues to function at all.

Even a brief review of the relevant facts in Khasi sociology, law and religion would *fill* a ponderous volume. We *will* therefore contend ourselves here with two illustrative facts which throw some light on the complexities of Khasi attitudes to feminity and to individual women.

Though the priestly function of the Lyngdoh is carried out by a man, a number of ceremonial religious performances, especially in the family, are to be conducted by women. It is therefore a disgrace for a family if there is no female member. In such a case the man concerned would adopt a girl[16] who, in a way, would be made to be "on top of the adopting man" as an experienced elderly Pnar himself put it in conversations on this problem with me.

This democratic procedure is parallelel by the following method of establishing new *Dkhar* clans.

Dkhar is the Khasi word for plains people. A *Dkhar* (or abbreviated *'khar*) clan is one, the first ancestress of which was a girl from the plains, who has been captured and carried off, during the formerly not infrequent "raids made by the Khasi over the border into Assam and Sylhet".[17] The Khasi neither were, nor are, in any superstitious, romantic or otherwise determined delusion about the physical or mental powers of women. The matrilineal Khasi used to capture, and carry off, girls in the plains just as other patrilineal hillmen used to do.

But whilst the captured girl's fate, among the latter, was that of a slave, or at best that of a married woman without any rights of her own, the more chivalrous and at the same time democratic attitude of the matrilineal Khasi put this same *captured helpless girl prisoner*, backed by nobody and without property of her own, yet into the important position of a clan-ancestress and named the clan, thus newly created, after her as a *Dkhar*—or plains-people clan. That this was by no means a single or isolated instance is shown by "the large number" of clans bearing "the name of *Dkhar* or its abbrevia-

tion : '*Khar*' as Gurdon points out. The powerful position of such a captured clan-ancestress, from the plains must have been more than merely in name. I met for instance the member, of a Khasi *Dkhar* clan who knew that his clan-ancestress, generations ago, had been a Muslim girl from the plains and who said that his clan-members observed a taboo on pork, until recently, when they were converted to Christianity or Unitarianism. It must also be noted that the members of *Dkhar* clans hold a position, in no way inferior, or less privileged, than any of the original "pure" Khasi clans, the ancestress (*Ka Jawbei*) of which were Khasi ladies themselves

In the Khasi attitudes to women we find thus a combination of realism, as far as their physical strength is concerned, and of chivalrous respect, as far as the psychological importance of women goes. This same attitude is reflected in almost every social custom, arrangement or institution, from the smallest to the most important.

Men are the first to get up, early in the morning, in order to lighten the fire and put the gruel for breakfast on, whilst women are allowed to sleep longer, though cooking is otherwise their task. Or it is the youngest, and thus physically and psychologically weakest, among the daughters who will be "heir-apparent", or more correctly the "custodian of the family property" in "her important position as the family priestess"[18]. This ambivalence in attitudes to women is not without bearing on the Khasi concept of the Great Deity. It finds, however, special elucidation in a particular linguistic form of changing the meaning of a substantive noun, by prefixing it with either *U*–the definite article of masculine gender, or *Ka* the feminine definite article.

U Maw, for instance, is a rock in its natural state, whilst a hewn stone is described as *Ka Maw*. The great importance which hewn stones played in the megalithic ceremonial of the Khasi, will here be remembered.[19] *U Dieng* is a living tree, and *Ka Dieng* is timber. Though some of my Khasi informants thought that in these cases the article *U* (masculine) is indicative of strength and *Ka* (feminine) of passivity, even weakness, there were others who felt that the feminine gender often signifies the superior part of pairs or comparable entities otherwise. The sun (*Ka Sngi*) for instance, is feminine whilst both moon (*U Bnai*) and star (*U Khlur*) are masculine. Heaven, again, is feminine (*Ka Bneng*), and so is the (borrowed) word for ocean in Khasi usage (*Ka Duriaw*), as also the so very important rubber tree (*Ka Jri*) which, according to mythology, joined once upon a time heaven with earth, or the majestic silk cotton tree (*Ka Kya*). It can, however, not be taken as proved that the sex, allotted to these

last named nouns, has actually any significance in Khasi sex-evaluation as such.

However that may be, the principle of slightly changing the meaning of a noun, by prefixing it with the definite article of the other sex, is applied in ordinary Khasi parlance, just as in the highly emotional appellation *U Blei Ka-Blei*. In ordinary usage, the prefixing with the feminine article smacks frequently of slight mockery. *Briew* is the Khasi word for human being. In an angry mood a Pnar (Jaintia) can be heard referring to a man, by calling him "*ka bruh*" (She-human). Khasi look upon plains people with condescension, if not contempt, and consider them as weaklings. Speaking of a plains man in that temper, he is often being referred to as a *Ka Dkhar* ("She-plainsperson"), although explicitly a man, not a woman, is here signified. This may sound incongruous with the Khasi attitude to the *Ka khunn Khaddu*, the yongest daughter and "heir-apparent"; who gives sanction to all family ceremonies, by going to the altar, bowing down and presenting the offerings

The remarks on plains women, or the wives and daughters of Bengali Brahmin officers in the provincial Government offices at Shillong, which I heard from my Khasi informants, showed me, however, that a certain amount of physical and mental strength is considered characteristic of, and desirable in, Khasi women.[20] whilst it is held to be absent in the women from the plains, particularly from Bengal, who are considered as too delicate and weak These circumstances may therefore account for the derogatory meaning of *Ka*, especially if applied to plainsmen.

Concluding this excursion into the psychology of Khasi attitudes to masculinity and feminity, as expressed in social behaviour patterns and linguistic usage, we will find that the addition of the masculine and feminine pronouns *U* and *Ka* to the same word *blei* (god) in the highly emotional appelative exclamation, described at the begining of this discussion, is no doubt more than a merely formalistic play with words.

4. South Assian Parallels.

Whilst engaged in field researches among Khasi and Pnar (Jaintias), discussing their concepts of the Great Deity, I was more than once reminded of the creation myth of the Kadar in south-western India, the central figure of which is a divine couple *Malavay and Malakuratti*,[21] the creators, or ancestors, of mankind.

The culture-historic position of the South Indian Kadar and the Assamese Khasi is poles apart. The Kadar do not belong to the

matrilineal groups of people in Southwest India. They are, on the other hand, a primitive bilaterally organized hill-tribe; true food-gatherers, quite ignorant of food production through agricultural operations, or of any social organization, beyond the small family, or local group. The Khasi and Pnar (Jaintia), on the other hand, are people of a specialised civilization with a typically evolved matrilinel social organization based on an elaborate agricultural economy, village life and all that goes with it, including a tradition of centuries in complex methods of housebuilding, of iron smelting, and iron-working, or of clan, and state-government under matrilineal ruling dynasties. It would indeed be surprising if any deeper inter-connection could be traced, between the Great Deity concepts among these two people of so widely differing cultural background.

There are, in fact, also essential differences between the divine couple of the Kedar and the Khasi Great Deity, inspite of some common features in sex-qualifications. The Kedar divine couple is connected with a double-pronged mountain and a primaeval flood-myth; two features, both of which are absent in the Khasi *U Blei-Ka Blei* concept. These two features are frequent among South Asian and particularly Austro-Asiatic speaking people, as has been shown in the late Professor L. Walk's systematization of the available mythological material[22].

The Khasi are Austro-Asiatic speaking, whilst the Kadar are not,—at least not now. The Kadar of to-day, on the other hand, speak a somewhat unusual form of Tamil. But during my field researches, among them, I came to feel that there are certain indications for their having spoken at one time a now forgotten non-Dravidian possibly Austro-Asiatic language. Their simple food gathering economic, and their bilateral social system as well as their bamboo combs and ornaments, their methods of tree-climbing in pursuance of honey, and in fact the above mentioned flood-myth itself;—all point to possible Kadan affinities with the Negritoes of Malaya[23], who, on their part, are geographically near the distributional centre of the flood and brother-sister myth. There is, however, one significant difference *Malavay-Malakuratty* of the Kadar are not conceived as a brother-sister couple. They are also not seeking refuge from the flood, rather brought up, on the surface of the earth, by it, whilst the typical brother-sister ancestors in most flood-myths are believed to have sought refuge in a floating vessel, frequently a pumpkin, to escape the flood. Such a couple is said to have done so, in another South Indian-flood-myth-version which I found in the Perya Malayli area (Shevarayan Hills of Salem Dt.)—though not as

their on, but as an outsider's ancestral tale[24].

The Kadan couple, however, is not conceived as a pair of siblings, but as a divine couple. The possibility of this element in the Kadan creation-myth having some connection with the ultimate origin of the Shiva-Shakti complex in Hindu motholology, inspite of the worlds of culture-historic differences between the truly primitive religion of the former and the highly specialized nature and history of the latter, has been hinted at, by me, elsewhere[25].

This same possibility seems now suggested, and with more force, regarding the *U Blei-Ka Blei* concept of the Khasi. This religious idea is not connected with a flood-myth and contains not even the slightest hint at a sibling-relationship between the two deities,—if of two deities we can at all speak here. We have seen that the Khasi language and Khasi usage lend themselves easily to expressing, but at the same time also slightly changing, a basic idea by adding the pronoun especially of feminine gender, to a noun, generally used in the masculine form. This is the actual way in which the same Great Deity is being sometimes described, or addressed, in the male and sometines in the female aspect or : both !

The artistic representation, in Hindu religious sculptuer, of Ardhanareshvara and Umamaheshvara could almost be taken as an illustration[26], in figurative form, of the completely un-iconic, hence abstract *U Blei-Ka Blei* concept of the Khasi.

5. Conclusions

The supreme deity in Khasi belief is differentiated, among various other things, from the lesser tutelary,—protecting or malignant spirits, by the alternative use of the masculine and feminine sex determination. This double sex of the Creator God is mainly being expressed by perfixing the word *Blei* (God) with the masculine and feminine determinate articles *U* and *Ka* respectively and also in addressing God (*Blei*) as Father and Mother simultanously.

The Khasi language provides examples of changing the sex-determination of a word in the same way, thereby slightly changing its meaning. The application of this same method to the Khasi word for God indicates a particular attitude to the deity. It would, in view of this attitude, be equally wrong to describe the Khasi deity as a "Mother Goddess", a Magna Mater, or to deny the female aspect of the Khasi supreme deity.

In this Khasi concept of the Great God-Goddess lie similarities with the divine couple in other parts of India, especially the Shiva-Shakti complex.

By thus drawing attention to similarities between the ideas of the supreme deity among different groups of the Indian area (—poles apart, among themselves, in almost all aspects of cultural history—) it is here not suggested that either the comparatively late appearance of Ardhanareshvara representations, as for instance in Elephanta sculpture, can be directly traced to the primaeval religious concepts among food-gatherers, such as the Kadar's, or else to the Austro-Asiatic speaking and physically mongoloid Khasi, who immigrated probably as a fully specialized confederation of agricultral village communities into the Indian area.

Yet it may be considered possible that the wider concept of Shiva-Shakti, as an ideological unit, is partly rooted in a religious idea[27] which, as we have seen, is characteristic of Khasi concepts and, in some way, also of the Kadar of Cochin, two otherwise quite disconnected groups in the richly interwoven culture—and population—pattern of this country.

NOTES

1. Canthe (1934), p 11, seq., Ehrenfels (1950/B), p 9,seq.
2. Ehrenfels (1941), p.58, seq., Menon (1937)
3. Gurdon (1914), p 105, seq , Lyngdoh (1937)
4. Gurdon (1941), pp (82), 151, 153, Nissor Singh (1906), Art: Laubei.
5. Ehrenfels (1941) p.36,161,171 seq. (1949), Art. No. 10 of Oct. 30, 1949.
6. Gurdon (1941), p.105.
7. i.e an abbreviation of the world *blei* (god).
8. i.e. administrator, or one who rules over, v. *infra*.
9. Elias (1938), p.53.
10. Rafy (1920), esp., pp 43, 100, 137.
11. Hajai—thousand *is* borrowed from Assamese, *Bengali* or *directly* from Hindusthani.
12. Lyngdoh (1937).
13. The *Mei Ramew* may be interpreted as an instance of an Earth Goddess conception, among Khasi, though its juxtaposition with *Mei Ramew hajrong* (i e. above) *points rather into* another direction. That the division male sky-god and female earth-goddess does not apply to the Khasi goddess is also indicated by the masculinity of *U Blei Rynghew* a male-Earth God whom I found as protector of village lands worshipped in the sacred groves and who ' takes care of and protects the country", Gurdon (1914), p. 171.
14. File No. 14/D in the Dy. Commissoner's Office, Shillong, to which access has kindly been given me in June 1950.
15 Cantile (1934), pp. 15/16 sub. *Nong-rap-ting* and Gurdon (1914) pp 85/86 sub. *Adoption*.
16. Gurdon (1914), p. 66.
17. Ibid.
18. Cantile (1934) p. 26, 27
19. Comp. illustrations.
20. Comp. illustrations.

21. Fhienfels (1950 A), pp. 167, seq., (1952 . 161 Seq. 191, Seq. 288 Seq)
22 Walk (1949), p. 63, seq 114.
23. Ehrenfels (1950 A), p 176 , (1952, p. 288 Seq)
24. This tale, which I have so far not yet published, contains the characteristic feature of the floating pumpkin, carrying the two refugees over the waters.
25. Ehienfels (1949 B), p 23.
26. "Shiva's consort unlike the wives of other gods is a very prominent figure in classical mythology scarcely inferior to Shiva himself Her equality of rank with her husband is naively expressed in the dual form of their divinity, the Ardhanaieshvara", says H Jacobi (1909) p. 813
27 For the consideration of this possibility I am gratefully indebted to general principles, indicated by Bo Yin Ra (1935) pp. 110, seq , 116 and 159 seq. and (1932) pp. 126/27.

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REVITALIZATION MOVEMENTS IN TRIBAL INDIA.

Edward Jay

Introduction :

Despite the ambitious nature of the title, this paper actually deals with revitalization movements in just one corner of India. This does not imply that movements elsewhere in India are non-existent or unimportant. But to the best of my knowledge there is no available data on them. Consequently, the following discussion involves only the limited materials available for four tribes in Bihar. The small amount of data, however, is not entirely a disadvantage. Although conclusions drawn from it must be more tentative than otherwise, it is easier to control and therefore fairly complete summaries of the movements are presented.

In general, this paper is an attempt to describe, classify, and provide some limited interpretations of revitalization movements among the Mundas, Santals, Oraons, and Bhumij tribes of Bihar. It is the thesis of the paper that these movements have functioned in the following ways :

1. They are expressions of group solidarity and social cohesion and have acted as unifying forces for groups under conditions of social disorganization.
2. They represent attempts to establish a new moral order where the old one has been destroyed.
3. They have acted as mediators between the Great and Little Traditions of India, or, more broadly speaking, as catalysts of acculturation.
4. They have aided in the structuring of a new social system of which both Hindu and tribal societies are a part.

The Mundas

Early History of the Tribe :—The Mundas are a tribe of the so-called Kolarian peoples of Central India, who migrated to their present habitat in Chotanagpur from somewhere in northern or northwestern India (Roy 1912 : Chapt. 1-2). The evidence presented by Roy on the origins and early history of the Mundas is extremely speculative, but there is some evidence in the form of both Hindu and Munda legends that one ancient habitat was in the

Many thanks are extended to Surajit Sinha for his helpful suggestions and comments and for the loan of various books as well as his notes on the Bhumij.

Siwalik Hills, bordering the Himalyas (Roy 1912 45). On the other hand, attribution of a civilized existence complete with forts and walled cities to the Mundas (Roy 1912 : 55–59) on the basis of the Rig Veda accounts is certainly disproved by the discovery and excavation of the Indus Valley Civilization in the 1920's (Marshall 1931). It is probable that tribal peoples lived in contact with the Indus civilization, but the identification of this civilization with the ancestors of existing Indian non-literates must be written off as no longer credible in the light of modern anthropological knowledge.

From their alleged home in northwest India, the Mundas, supposedly a pastoral people at that time (Roy 1912 : 43, 121), migrated eastwards under the pressure of Aryan invasion from the west (Roy 1912 : 42, 113). The legends and traditions of the Mundas relate countless battles fought with Hindus and tribals alike ; but in every case extended contact with foreign peoples was avoided, and the Mundas retreated until they eventually reached their present habitat in the Chotanagpur district of West Bengal. By the time of their arrival there, the Mundas apparently were already agriculturists (Roy 1912 : 114–18). The growing complexity of Munda social organization due to the establishment of many new villages, plus contact with neighbouring Hindus, resulted in political charges of great importance some time earlier than the fifteenth century, A. D. At that time the head of an important family became a raja, or ruler of the whole community, thus superceding the old system of rule by separate leaders, each one representing a cluster of villages or *patti* (Roy 1912 : 134–35). Originally, the raja seems to have had limited powers, but gradually his importance increased, and several sections of the tribe broke away to take up residence in the jungle country to the south and southeast of the central plateau of Chotanagpur (Roy 1912 : 141). This pattern of splitting off from the main body and establishing a new colony seems to have occurred again several times in the course of Munda history prior to A. D. 1500 (Roy 1912 : 145–47).

Eventually there was virtually no more retreat for the Mundas and the growing power of the raja, who presumably was by this time a Hindu, resulted in further political and social changes in the region. Foreign nobles and courtiers were granted village overlordship by the raja in return for services and a percentage of profits from the land. These *jagirdars*, as they were called, came into conflict with the established *khuntkatti* leaders, or heads of families, which were believed to be founders of the villages (Roy 1912 : 168–74). The ancient tenure system was altered, and new lands were created for

support of the now growing ruling class. Again groups of Mundas migrated to new lands where they cleared the jungle and founded other villages (Roy 1912 : 173–75).

By this period some of the tribe appears to have been living in close contact with Hindus, and Roy reports that a few Vaisnavite converts were made among the Mundas. It may be that this was the first of a series of efforts by the Mundas to put themselves on an even footing with the surrounding Hindu society, by emulation or resistance.

In the Panch Parganas, a number of well-to-do Mundas, ambitious of rising in the social scale, have adopted the faith of their more civilised Hindu neighbours, by preference, the Vaisnav form of the religion . ...But the most striking phenomenon in the History of Chotanagpur is the unbending conservatism of the more strong—willed Mundas. We have seen......how this tenacious tribe in their anxiety to protect their sacred birth-right, their ancient village organization and of land-system-made a gradual tour of the entire country from one end of it to the other (Roy 1912 : 179, 181).

Early Disturbances in Chotanagpur :—The late eighteenth century was a time of increasing change and growing discontent among the Mundas. British dominance of Chotanagpur led to increasing revenue burdens on the raja's treasury. This, plus an army of Moslem merchants in the area, soon put the raja in debt. In lieu of royal cash, land grants were made to the Moslems, and once again a new class of alien landlords added to the burden on the land. The oppressive *jagirdars* and *thiccadars*, as the landlords were called, exploited local resources until the majority of the Mundas were living dangerously close to bare subsistence. The great drought of 1819–20 precipitated an open revolt which was followed by a second in 1832. Principal targets of the plundering, shooting, and burning that took place were the foreign landlords—the Pathans, Mussalmans, and Sikhs. The revolt was put down with considerable difficulty by the British, and severe losses were incurred by both sides during the fighting. The Mankis, or Munda chiefs, with hereditary rights to certain lands that had been usurped by the *thiccadars* and *jagirdars*, were reinstated on their land by a series of reforms instituted by the British (Roy 1912 : 198–217).

The new administrative system introduced by the British made it possible for disputes to be taken to the courts, but in this arena "the Hindus soon became masters of the field", and the old evils returned fullblown (Roy 1912 : 219, 220—23). The original "holders

of villages" were again reduced to mere "holders of the plough" (Roy 1912 : 226). German missionaries entered the Munda country in the middle of the nineteenth century, and after a slow start enormous numbers of converts were made, especially after the natives learned that Christians usually were accorded better treatment in the courts than non christians (Roy 1912 : 302). Furthermore, the aborigines seem to have found in Christianity a way to resist the encroachments of the foreign landlords, and it is possible that Christian doctrine carried with it a measure of prestige and power that the Mundas believed would be helpful in their struggle. "The movement against the heathen was so mighty that the aborigines feared least their landlords, the Hindu Zamindars, also should become Christians and that then things would be worse than ever, since they never would give up the habit of depriving poor people of their land" (Roy 1912 : 239). A missionary report of the time claims that there were 1,700 baptized converts among the Mundas by 1860, but admits that most of the new Christians were merely seeking aid from the missionaries in an effort to "be saved from the unjust oppression of the Hindus and regain the land that they had been deprived of". The same report complains that the converted Mundas "did not suffer the wrong in a Christian spirit, but showed themselves disobedient and obstinate against their masters and openly opposed them" (Roy 1912 : 240). Violence again flared up when many of the Christians were continually persecuted by the landlords (Roy 1912 : 240–46), and the long-term land disputes were only slightly alleviated by the much lauded "Bhuinhari Settlement" of 1869 (Roy 1912 : 269–81).

The Sardar Movement :—The sardars appear to have been a pseudo-Christian sect that attempted to organize the Mundas during the 1870's to permanently overthrow the landlord groups and re-establish complete hold over the land. It is significant that the *sardars* were literate or had among them certain leaders who were literate, and were thus able to petition the government by a series of "memorials" in which their grievances and claims were fully aired Failing to receive missionary support, the *sardars* severed all connections with the latter and attempted to induce among their kinsmen mass withdrawals from Christian schools and churches "One of the agitators himself made an unauthorised celebration of a marriage according to Christian rites" (Roy 1912 : 284). The *sardars* claimed that monuments and other ruines in Chotanagpur had been built by their ancestors and in other ways emphasized their traditional rights on the land. Roy (1912 : 285) quotes a political report of the time :

To one who has not been among them, it is difficult to realise the passionate attachment of these savages to the grove and graveyard of their clan and to the fields which their ancestors cleared among the forests, and equally difficult to realise how sensitive they are to the degredation from the honourable rank of Khuntkattidar to that of a mere raiyat.

The sardar agitation appears to have been well-organized and militant; but it failed to fully unite the Mundas and the long-term struggles between Mundas, and the surrounding society continued. Missionaries of the Society of Jesus entered the country in the late 19th century and once again there was a mass conversion to Christianity, followed by the same disillusionment that characterized the earlier missionary activities. In 1889 and 1890 a new wave of agrarian disturbances swept across Chotanagpur (Roy 1912 : 294–306), largely brought about by persecution of the new converts by the landlord class. During this period, there is mention in Roy's account of witchcraft accusations, and it appears as though social disorganization was considerably advanced. "The spirit of antagonism between landlord and ryot was so strong and generally diffused throughout the district, that it might at any time cause a breach of the peace on a large scale" (Bayley *In* Roy 1912 : 299).

The Birsa Movement :—The year 1895 marked the beginning of a movement of considerable importance, and one that is worth considering in some detail. A youth of twenty-one who called himself Birsa Munda, and who possessed an unusually compelling personality, had a revelation in which the Deity communicated with him, empowered him with knowledge of curing and religious truths. The news of his miraculous experience was spread by a companion and soon tales of his power to cure and advise were circulating widely. (Roy 1912 : 325–28)

His fame spread to the remotest corner of the Munda country. 'Expectations ran high. The credulous Mundas...flocked in from all directions to see the young prophet newly arisen in the realm...The lame, the halt, the blind, the sick, came in shoals to Birsa to be healed.

Birsa revealed his message for the salvation of the tribe which he had received from Singh Bonga Himself. Birsa proclaimed that the Mundas would heretofore be required to worship one God only and must give up their sacrifices to a multitude of deities. Furthermore, they must be pious and clean, abstain from the eating of meat, and always wear the sacred thread (Roy 1912 : 328).

It is important to note that Birsa had received an education in the German Mission School at Chaibasa, but that he "soon reverted to the old Munda faith of his ancestors" (Roy 1912 : 326). His teachings seem to reflect Christian, Hindu, and native ideas, and the popularity of this composite doctrine was soon made evident by the numerous and devoted disciples that he drew around him. Some of the latter began calling him Bhagwan, or God Himself (Roy 1912 : 329).

In keeping with his new position, Birsa now announced that on a near date, which he named, fire and brimstone would descend from heaven and destroy all men on earth save and except those who had the good sense to repair to Chalkad and stay near him on that day.

The success of the movement is attested by its failure to disintegrate when the expected millenium did not arrive. The authorities threw Birsa into jail at this point because of the large and dangerous crowds he was drawing. His trial was halted abruptly, however, when his followers threatened violence, only to be resumed again with the consequence that he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. At the end of his imprisonment he resumed his activities, and came into open conflict with the Hindus at Chutia when he used their temple for his own ceremonies. But in subsequent years he went into hiding, though his followers carried on the movement in his name (Roy 1912 : 333–34).

Then, in 1899, "he once more emerged from his temporary eclipse. He felt the pulse of his people with tolerable accuracy, and now made a dramatic bid for renewed popularity by adding dangerous political tenets to his innocent religious teachings" (Roy 1912 : 334). *Prachars*, or religious teachers, were appointed by Birsa and a book of prayers was compiled. Between 1897 and 1900 a famine and an epidemic of cholera swept Chotanagpur and added to the general misery of the almost landless, struggling Mundas. Birsaites held a series of revolutionary meetings throughout the district and the following account of one of these, given by one of Birsa's disciples, is related by Roy (1912 : 337).

We arrived at the meeting-place before midnight. The meeting place was on the top of a hill. When we arrived we found about sixty or eighty persons assembled. Birsa sat on a stone. There was cloth spread on the stone on which Birsa sat. Birsa sat facing the east and the rest of the people sat around him. About midnight every one had assembled, and shortly afterwords moon rose. When everyone had assembled, Birsa asked what troubles we suffered from.

Jagai of Kudda and three or four others whose names I do not know said that we suffered from the oppression of Zamindars and Jagirdars and Thikadars. Birsa then told us to make bows and arrows and *baluas*, as we were greatly oppressed. We all said we would make them and Birsa said that he had given a similar order at other meetings in different parts of the country, and that everyone was making weapons who belonged to his religion. Birsa said that the weapons were to be used for killing Thikadars and Jagirdars and Rajas and Hakims and Christians. Some of the persons assembled asked if the Rajas and Hakims and Christians would not shoot with their guns and kill us. Birsa replied that we would not be struck, that the guns and bullets would turn to water, and said that on the day of the great Christian festival two weeks later, he would come, and that we were to have the weapons ready. The meeting broke up at cock-crow

In addition, Bir steel (literally, hero-water) was sprinkled over his followers by Birsa a few days before the scheduled insurgence. This was accompanied by various ceremonies which Birsa claimed would make his warriors invincible. The revolt came off on schedule, but the Mundas were put down with native troops under the direction of the local commissioner, and Birsa was captured. Roy relates that Birsa died in jail while awaiting his trial, but he does not mention the cause of his death (Roy 1912 : 338-43).

Though the essence of the Birsa movement had been destroyed, Munda unrest continued. A series of laws were passed by the British, but all fell short of genuine usefulness for one reason or another Basically it appears that the British had little or no knowledge of Munda culture and social conditions, and legal methods of the sort employed in Great Britain were practically useless in tribal India. Also, it is obvious that economic factors, though fundamental in the disputes, were not the only factors operating to produce friction between Mundas and the surrounding society. The landlords belonged to alien cultures, and as such were not recognized by the tribal people as a functioning part of the society. The Mundas continually tried to revive the old *khuntkatti* system with its *mankis* or native leaders, not only because they sensed in it a more just economic arrangement, but because the *mankis* were of their own people and had behind them the full weight of tradition.

The Santals

About 150 miles northeast of Chotangpur is located the district called Santal Parganas, part of the area in West Bengal occupied by

the Santal Tribe of Mundari speaking people. At the time of the famous Santal Rebellion of 1855–57, there were about 1,400 Santal villages with a population of about 85,000 living in the Damin-i-koh area of the Santal Parganas (Datta 1940 : 3). About earlier rebellious and resistance movements there is no record that is readily available but an account (Datta 1940) of the insurrection of 1855 indicates that the grievances leading up to were of the same order as those just described for the Mundas.

An account of the group which had been written in 1951 describes the Santals as "an orderly race of people, their rulers have little more to do than bear their honours and collect the rent" (Sherwill *In* Datta 1940 : 5). Such grievances as they had were taken to court from time to time, but "justice in the shapes of the Magistrate was so far off and so terribly difficult of access" (Datta 1940). And even by "undertaking a troublesome journey to the Court of Justice ...a Santal could not always expect justice because of the various artifices practised by the cunning" landlords, money lenders, and merchants who were his enemies (Datta 1940 : 3). Groups of these people had moved into the Damin-i-koh from the plains below and their presence began to make itself felt in Santal life. Most of them were Hindu and Moslem Bengalis and their control of economic facilities was soon accomplished.

The causes of the insurrection were deeply rooted in the changing conditions of the time. It had its origin in the economic grievances of the Santals, due to the oppressions and frauds committed on those simple-minded people by the above mentioned Bengali and up-country merchants and money lenders. The extorions of these merchants and *mahajans* had become awful, and they had amassed large fortunes within an incredibly short period by securing cash and grains from the Santals through various obnoxious ways (Datta 1940 : 5).

By lending money in periods of dearth by charging high rates of interest, the money lenders soon had the Santals in debt; before long the latter were reduced to mere tenants, and exceedingly poor ones at that. In addition, greedy Zemindars preyed upon the land by exacting heavy taxes which the over-burdened Santals could not pay and were thus forced to forfeit their property (Datta 1940 : 5–6). Moreover, alien landlords also obtained leases on Santal lands through the good auspices of their Zemindar compatriots. Still another source of grievance in the form of European railway workers is reported by Datta. These workers sporadically engaged in pillaging, murder and rape among the tribals, and seemed to be eminently

successful in arousing the people's hatred in a relatively short time (Datta 1940 : 7–8). It is easy to understand why the Santals came to regard all that was foreign with suspicion and fear, and it was not long before resistance movements of politico-religious nature arose among them.

In an area to the south of Damin-i-koh, a Santal Chief, called Morgo Rajah, attempted to organize the Santals into a separate kingdom, but was unsuccessful (Datta 1940 : 8–9). The first prophet of the Santals was Bir Singh who declared that the god Chando Banga had appeared before him and gave him magical charms by means of which "he could cause the sound sleep of any man whom he wished to rob of his wealth" (Datta 1940 : 11). Thus a resistance movement was organized which held night-time meetings. These were considered suspicious by the Hindus, who challenged members of the movement to reveal their intentions. The latter replied that "their nightly meetings were meant for worshipping the God Shiva of Gadi, and frustrated all the attempts of the *dikus* to know the secrets of their meetings" (Datta 1940 : 11). Bir Singh was cornered and beaten by the money lenders whereupon his followers sacked and pillaged the Hindu homes, but were soon put down by the police (Datta 1940 : 12–13).

The next prophets of the Santals were the brothers Sidhu and Kanhu, who experienced a wonderful revelation :

They were at night seated in their home...when a bit of paper fell on Sidhu's head, and suddenly the Thakur (God) appeared before the astonished gaze of Sidhu and Kanhu ; he was like a white man though dressed in the native style ; on each hand he had ten fingers ; he held a white book, and wrote therein ; the book and with it 20 pieces of paper, in 5 batches, 4 in each batch, he presented to the brothers ; ascended upwards and disappeared...But there was not merely one apparition of the sublime Thakoor ; each day in the week for some short period, did he knife, and another in the figure of...a solid cart wheel. In the silvery pages of the book, and upon the white leaves of the single scrap of paper, were words written ; these were afterwards deciphered by literate Santals, able to read and interpret ; but their meaning had already been sufficiently indicated to the two leaders (Calcutta Review *In* Datta 1940 : 14–15).

A mass meeting of the Santals was held in 1855, and about 10,000 Santals announced their decision to eliminate the Bengali overlords in the area and to establish a government of their own. Notable is the fact that certain depressed Hindu castes, such as the potters, oil-men, blacksmiths, shoemakes, etc. were exempted from vengeance

(Datta 1940 : 15-16). And so, with the symbol of Thakur as their inspiration, the Santals launched a program of consolidation and conquest which shook Bengal and was finally abated only by a strong British military force (Datta : 16-18).

The Oraons

Early History and Resistance Movements :—The Oraons, another tribe of Chotanagar, are a Dravidian speaking people who occupy territory near the Hindus and who lived in contact with the latter for several hundred years (Roy 1912 : 124-31, 191, 281 ; 1915 : 17-18, 36-38 ; 1928 : 312). Roy believes that the tribe originally lived somewhere in South India and migrated northwards (1915 : 25-28). By means of a somewhat conjectural historical method the same author traced the migrations of the Oraons to and from several points in Central India, one of which is alleged to be Rohtasgarh where the Mundas, as we have seen, dwelled for a time (1915 : 29-36). By the time of their arrival in Chotanagar, the Oraons were also an agricultural people (Roy 1915 : 1) and their political organization was similar to that of the Mundas (Roy 1915 : 38—39). Each village had its leaders and a number of villages were organized into a *parna* (or *patti*) which also had a headman, or *parna-raja*. This headman seems to have gained in power as time went on, and, under the influence of Hindus and the pressure of Moslem traders and soldiers, a *jagirdar* system was established in the Oraon country (Roy 1915 : 39-43).

The Oraons were involved in the general uprisings of 1820, 1832, and 1889-90 which have been discussed in the preceding section. In addition, some of the Oraons joined the Birsa movement in 1896 (Roy 1915 : 42-48). Like the Mundas, the Oraons had to constantly adjust to Hindu and Moslem landlords, and the cycle of struggle that they passed through was similar to that of their neighbours.

The Bhagat Movements

Nemha Bhagats and Bachi-dan Bhagats :—Of greater interest perhaps than the revolts and uprisings by force of arms is the Bhagat movement among the Oraons. The Hindus who believe in salvation through Bhagti Marga, or the way of devotion, are known as Bhagats. Bhakti has been defined as "ardent and hopeful devotion to a particular deity in grateful recognition of aid received or promised" (Noss 1949 : 228). According to Roy, the rudiments of this movement were present in Oraon society by the end of the nineteenth century, if not before (Roy 1928 . 316). In the light of knowledge of Hindu contact previous to this, however, it seems that the raw

materials for the movement existed at a still earlier date.

In parts of Bihar the term Bhagat is often employed to designate *sorcerers and magicians*, "*but among the Oraons of* Chotanagpur the name Bhagat has come to be applied as the distinctive name of a section of the tribe which subscribes to the cult of Bhakti or loving trust in and adoration of the Deity and observes certain rules of ceremonial purity" (Roy 1928 : 323). The entire Bhagat movement, attempting as it does to raise the status of its members in the eyes of the surrounding Hindu society, is characterized by a large scale incorporation into its ideology of Hindu beliefs and practices. Neverheless, the movement is divided into several subdivisions, and one of these, these Bhachhi-dan Bhagat, is more Hinduized than the others (Roy 1928 : 317–18). This group is especially strong among wealthy Oraons. It employs Gosains, or degraded Brahmans as *gurus*, and in some cases Vaisnava-Vairagis who belong to lower Hindu castes. Such Bhagats are commonly known as Bachhidan ("calf-giving"), because they must give a calf to their *guru* in the process of expiating their past sins and ceremonial impurity. Some Bachhidan Bhagats who take Vaishnava Gosains as their *gurus* call themselves Vishnu Bhagats and do not eat flesh of any kind, including fish and goat's meat. Other Bhagats worship Mahadeo, the Great God, and his female consert, Devi Mai, instead of Vishnu. They sacrifice goats ceremonially and do not abstain from either goat's meat or fish.

> All Bhagats...are required to maintain the rules of ceremonial purity in food, drink, and other habits that the Bhuiphut Bhagats introduced ; and all retain most of the social customs and observances of the tribe which do not militate against the Bhagat's ideas of ceremonial purity. It may be noted to the credit of some of these Gosains that in the case of an Oraon...who agrees to become a Bacchidan Bhagat, the Gossain or Guru...in most cases, requires of him a year's probation before giving him *kan-phukt* or initiation. During this year of probation the disciple is required to observe the rules of ceremonial purity in food and drink and other habits to prove his fitness to become a Bhagat. Some Bhagat families have, however, become lax in their observance of the strict rules of ceremonial purity and abstention from the use of unclean food and liquor (Roy 1928 : 318-19).

It appears that among most of the Bhagats, especially among the ordinary or Nemha Bhagats, tribal ideas have generally been fused with Hindu ideas, and Bhakti worship is quite different among them than it is among orthodox Hindus. Enthusiastic Bhagat cul-

tists often obtain visions in which the way of devotion is made clear to them, but the cultural forms involved in the eliciting of visions are tribal in nature. The Oraons possessed customs and traditions that made them familiar with the concepts of visions and tutelary gods even before contact with Hindus, according to Roy (1928 : 323). These include : "The tribal belief in an All—Good Creator...the indigenous mode of acquiring a tutelary spirit in the shape of a *Chandi* stone from under the ground by some fortunate young initiates of the Oraon Bachelor's fraternity, and the belief in "spirit possession"..." Neither do Bhagats generally give up all the aboriginal religious beliefs, although the ethnographer's account does not make it clear just what elements of the old practices are retained.

Kabirpanthi Bhagats —Two other forms of Bhagat movement are described by Roy and are worth considering here in some detail. One of these, the Kabirpanthi Bhagats, also involves the use of Hindu *gurus* as spiritual advisors. In one area, several Oraons are themselves *gurus* (Roy 1928 : 329). The overall ideology of this cult is about the same as that of the other Bhagat groups. Its *gurus*, however, in addition to their roles as spiritual advisors are also priests. Their ministrations are required for the *chauka* or religious service that must be performed at such *rites de passage* as birth, marriage, and death (Roy 1928 : 326-27). As with most other Bhagats, tribal customs are not altogether abandoned, and the regular Oraon ceremonies are also performed at these events. The Kabirpanthi Bhagats do not form a strictly endogamous group, but marriage within its boundaries is preferred (Roy 1928 . 330).

The most important tenets of the Kabirpanthi Bhagats cult may be summarized as follows :

1. Abstention from the worship of idols and the use of other visible symbole of divinity.
2. Abstention from the use of intoxicating beverages as drink or libation.
3. Opposition to the sacrificing or eating of fowls, pigs, and oxen.
4. Opposition to the worship of spirits and minor deities.
5. Belief in a single god and in the way of Bhakti devotion.
6. Emphasis on certain ethical principles, such as upright and just conduct, regard for truth, kindness to living beings, and tolerance for those who differ in status or belief.
7. Use of *gurus* as spiritual advisors and priests.
8. Wearing of a rosary or at least a bead of the sacred Basil, which his *guru* ties around his neck at the time of initiation.

It should be emphasized that these tenets represent the ideal behavior of Kabirpanthi Bhagats, and are not always strictly observed. "The Oraon Kabirpanthi Bhagat, as much as the Nemha Bhagat, believes in *bhuts* or malignant spirits and regards them as devils to be shunned or repelled." But the members of this cult employ new methods to exercise these spirits. Instead of relying on the old tribal customs, they sing *bhajans*, or hymns, which are learned from the Hindu gurus (Roy 1928 : 335). Except for the Tana Bhagat movement, to be discussed below, the Kabirpanthi Bhagat cult perhaps illustrates better than any other the fusion of Hindu and tribal ideas and practices.

Tana Bhagats :—The second form of Bhagat movement that should be discussed in some detail is that of the Tana Bhagat, or as it was called in its earlier phases, the "Kurukh Dharam" (literally, the "original religion of the Kurukhs, or Oraons") (Roy 1928 : 339-403). Unlike the other Bhagat movements, the Tana Bhagat is characterized by the inclusion of strong social and economic adjuncts

What constituted the initial strength of the new faith and contributed to its phenomenal success in the beginning,. was the combination of a strong desire for delivery from the bondage of capricious and blood-thirsty tribal spirits with perhaps a still stronger desire for delivery from the burden of what they regarded as an oppressive and inequitable land-system and land laws. Indeed, what appears to have appealed most strongly to the generality of the followers of the new faith was the promise held out by the originators of the movement that through Bhakti to Bhagwan (God) they would be able to raise the present degraded social position of their community to the higher level occupied by the Hindus and Christian converts amongst their tribe-fellows and obtain relief from their long-standing agrarian grievances and the present wretchedness of their enonomic position (Roy 1928 : 340).

The leaders of this movement maintained that the tribal spirits and deities whom they had been worshipping were not helping them alleviate the social and economic ills to which they had fallen victim, and indeed affirmed that these deities were responsible for the present state of degradation. Proceeding according to the retionale that those gods were in reality not Oraon, but alien deities that had been imported from Munda religion, the originators of the Tana Bhagat movement embarked on a program of proselytization and agitation for the exorcism of the foreign spirit. The cult emphasized a return to the original, or real Oraon religion and consequently became known as the Kurukh Dharam (Roy 1928 : 341).

The movement was apparently initiated in 1914 by a young tribesman who called himself Jatra Bhagat and who is described as a "sensitive youth" who proclaimed to his fellow tribesmen that in a dream Dharmes (the supreme God) told him to give up *Matia* (ghost-finding and exorcism) and the belief in *bhuts* or spirits, to adjure all animal sacrifice, animal food and liquor, and to give up ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty, and no more to work as coolies or labourer-under men of other castes and tribes (Roy 1928 : 341-42). Like Birsa Bhagwan among the Mundas, Jatra proclaimed that a new day was dawning, and that those who did not count themselves among his followers would be destroyed. Dharmes had further ordered Jatra to teach his people the Mantras, or songs and incantations, and thereby to cure their diseases and other afflictions (Roy 1928 : 342).

The new faith soon began to spread like wild fire. On his refusal to allow his followers to take up work as coolies for the construction of a school in village Dokotoli adjacent to his own village, the local police sent up Jatra Bhagat, as he was called, for trial along with seven of his followers to the court of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Gumla and they were bound down to keep the peace. And thus ended the first manifestation of the new spirit.

At about the same time that Jatra was preaching the new religion, a woman who was well known as a leader of the local and elder Tana religion also obtained a vision from Mahadeo, and began preaching the new Bhakti faith which eventually became known as Tana Bhagat (Roy 1928 : 343). In essence, this cult was closely allied in ideology to the earlier Kurukh Dharam and may be considered as as another expression of it, or at the most a minor variation of the original Other Oraons also had visions, and Roy (1928 : 343) comments that "all such local prophets expressed the group-mind and thereby impressed their tribe-fellows and were hailed as *gurus* or teachers of the new faith."

As we have seen, the earliest manifestation of the Tana Bhagat movement emphasized the expulsion of the evil spirits imported from the Mundas, and the active rebellion against unfair landlords. Even after the imprisonment of Jatra Bhagat, some of the members of the cult stopped payment of rents to their landlords and ceased ploughing their lands. Many gave up the drinking of intoxicating beverages. Consequently local landlords and liquor sellers became "panic-stricken", and feared that a violent uprising of the Mundas was imminent. In addition, the new movement organized ghost-hunting

drives at night in an attempt to get rid of evil spirits. It did not take long before meetings of the Tana Bhagat "were regarded with suspicion and exaggerated into disloyal and illegal" gatherings. It is interesting to note that the name "German Baba" was added to the list of powers invoked at some of these meeting. Roy (1928 : 345) speculates that "this was no doubt due to ignorance rather than sedition, for in those days the earlier victories of the Germans in the *European war were everywhere talked about* and these ignorant religious enthusiasts took 'German Baba' or the 'German God' as one more unknown mighty power." It can be readily understood that "the Tana Bhagats soon came into open conflict with their Hindu landlords and with the police". The authorities accordingly prohibited nightly gatherings, and "several batches of followers of the new religion were sent up to the courts as likely to commit breaches of the peace, and on their failure to furnish sufficient security were sent to prison".

In defense of these Oraon Tana Bhagats, Roy (1928 : 346) relates that in the orderly daytime meetings that were allowed, only social, moral, and religious resolutions were passed and that the cultists specifically tried to avoid quarrels with non aboriginals who they nevertheless realized were spreading false rumors about them. The Tana Bhagats "were solely bent upon purging out of their villages the old ghosts and spirits...and raising their...social position by the abandonment of what they considered to be degrading practices *such as the keeping and eating of pigs and fowls and the use of* intoxicants".

Accordingly, the later manifestations of the movement were concerned more with promulgating new and vigorous rules of conduct and with the formulation of an explicit body of doctrine than with directly attempting to institute social and economic reforms (Roy 1928 : 344, 346). The ethnographer describes the exorcism processes in great detail, and it is obvious that the cultural forms utilized are aboriginal in nature even though they are being put to a new use. "The *modus operandi* adopted by the Tana Bhagats to expel the *bhuts* or spirits from the country was...an adaptation of the old process of exorcism employed by the Oraon Mati or spirit-doctor in cases of spirit possession" (Roy 1928 : 347). In addition to the alien spirits imported from the Mundas, other evil forces were acted against these *represented the evils of the Western world : the steam-boat,* the railway engine, the motor car, and the bicycle (Roy 1928 : 350). The general procedure for expelling evil spirits and powers was to invoke a large crowd of Oraons and then to sing *mantras* such as the

following :

Pull, Father, Pull-Pull-Pull-Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull the *bhuts* that live in hiding.
Pull, Father, Pull-Pull-Pull-Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhuts* of ditches and mounds ;
Pull, Father, *etc.*—
Pull, *etc.*—the *bhuts* of persons slain ;
Pull the *bhuts* of the witches.
O Father Moon, O Father Sun.
O Father Earth : O Father Starry Host
In the names of ye all, we pray,—
Pull *etc.*, pull the steam boat, the railway train, the motor car, etc.

The recitations and the singing raised the congregation to an emotional pitch and then they would enter a house and "search every creek and corner. .and at length would come out with some such article as a stick or a plait of straw as an emblem of the *bhut* they have captured" (Roy 1928 : 352).

The total ideology of the Tana Bhagat movement may be summarized as follows :

1. Exorcism of evil ghosts and spirits and alien deities

2. Abolition of all of the following · drinking liquor, eating meat, sacrificing hens and pigs, worshipping at the sacred grove ; the carrying on of sorcery, the playing of musical instruments, dancing, and festivals ; the weaving of elaborate jewelry and head dresses ; the continuing of the customs of pre-marital sex-relations, the institution of *dhumkuria* or dormitories for young men and women, certain kinds of ceremonial friendship, and the former customs of marriage.

3. Return to the pure religion of the original Oraons.

4. Recognition of the one god, Mahadeo or Bhagwan and worship of him by Bhakhti devotion.

5. Learning how to meditate and pray with deep concentration and conviction.

6. Love and good-will towards fellow men, kindness to all living beings, and purity in food and habits.

A component in this religion of considerable interest is the invoking of various Hindu gods in some of the prayers, including Sita, Indra, Gahesh and Jagarnath. Another characteristic of importance is the fork of some *mantras*, which run like Christian psalms and prayers, and show the possible influences of Christianity on the new religion. Some examples of this are the following :

In the beginning came the Gospel of Lakshmi (i. e., Tanaism). In the beginning all men...offered prayers to God the Father—

Come God our Father, come into our yard and to our door, O Brethren, Father,...you call, but our Father is within our heart and within our body.

The Tana Bhagat movement broke up into a number of smaller cults after a number of years. Some of these, like the Sibu Bhagat, are extremist and very orthodox in point of view. They refuse to use cattle and have, in general, given up the cultivation of land. Other groups are less orthodox than the main body of Bhagats and have not given up the use of jewelry. All Bhagat groups have incorporated greater or lesser amounts of Hindu ideas into their religion. Some are already recognized as *Bachidan* Bhagats.

Summary of the Bhagat Movements:—In general, the Bhagat movement among the Oraons seems to constitute an attempt to emulate the religion and culture of their Hindu neighbours and to gain prestige in their eyes. Such a tendency seems to be most marked among tribal peoples in India when the group as a whole is in the process of becoming part of the wider Hindu society. Such a process has developed only after a long period of contact with Hindus, and has not taken place on any perceptible scale so long as the tribal group considered itself as something apart from Hindu society. As we have seen in the section on the Mundas, so long as the latter condition prevails, the tendency among tribals is to avoid contact with the Hindus, or, if this is impossible, active opposition to them is organized and often expresses itself in violence. Later in the paper we will consider a recent movement among the Bhumij which is similar in many respects to the Bhagat movement among the Oraons.

The Christian Movement :—The history of Christian movements among the Oraons seems to be similar to that among the Mundas. Large numbers of converts were obtained by the missionaries during times of economic and political stress, when missions aided the tribal peoples in their fights in the law courts against the landlord. In general, the Bhagat movement appears to have been influenced less by Christianity than have comparable movements among the neighbors of the Oraons. It is significant that modern inventions such as the steam engine are considered to be evil powers by the Oraons, and it is not unlikely that such products of modern technology tended to be associated with the missionaries.

Organized Hindu Movements :—According to Roy (1928 : 403–04), early twentieth century attempts by Hindus to bring the Oraons into the fold of orthodox Hinduism were not very successful. Some

Hindus attempted to give them *suddhi* or ceremonial purification. The Arya Samaj, a progressive Hindu group, tried to make the Oraons a part of its structure. The failure of the latter group to make a strong impression on the Oraons is attributed by the ethnographer to failure of the group to make the tribals understand "its somewhat abstract conception of the deity" (Roy 1928 : 404). And orthodox Hinduism, according to the same author, would relegate the tribals to the lowest rung of the caste system and for that reason is unpopular with the tribe.

Sociologically speaking, it would appear that the Oraons will not accept a body of religious doctrine that is purely Hindu until they consider themselves a part of the structure of Hindu society. The movements that have been discussed in this paper seem to indicate a general apartness of the Oraons as a group. The gradual incorporation of Hindu ideas and practices into tribal life has gradually transformed the Oraons into something that is not quite new yet not quite old. The availability of a body of Hindu custom from which the Oraons can draw selectively has enabled them to create a new design for the good life that is more acceptable to the society around them and which has aimed at the achievement of a higher social status, but which does not completely negate the fundamental distinctiveness of Oraon society and culture.

The Bhumij

The Bhumij are another Mundari speaking tribe of Manbhum. The earliest knowledge we have of revitalization movements among this group is that it was to some extent involved in the general disturbances of 1832 under the leadership of Ganga Narain (Dalton 1872 : 170). The revolt was characterized by the same violent activities as those in the Munda country. The local raja was one of the principal targets of the rebels, and though he escaped, *diwan* or prime minister was killed. A strong armed force was required to put down the insurrection.

To my knowledge, no readily available data exists on the history of Bhumij movements during the succeeding 100 years. It is not unreasonable to suppose, however, that the disturbances and struggles that took place among the Mundas and Oraons were paralleled in the Bhumij area.

In the 1930's an important movement arose among the Bhumij known, as the Bhumij Kshatriya movement (Sinha 1956)[2]. A group of influential Bhumij political leaders formally organised the Manbhum Bhumij Kshatriya Asssociation in 1935, but there are

indications that the movement was actually underway earlier. Its principal leader was Dinabandhu Pabar Singh, the Taraf Sardar of Bamni.

The movement seems to be characterized by an attempt to identify the Bhumij with the Kshatriya, or warrior caste, and to reorganize the culture so that it will regain its former high status and strategic importance in the wider Hindu society. A memorandum in Bengali was published by the group and circulated throughout the area in which Dinanbandhu had jurisdiction. It asserted that the Bhumij were in fact Kshatriya, and cited the opinion of scholars and passages from the sacred texts to this effect. It further called for a conscious attempt to build up Bhumij society in accordance with past traditions of learning, religion, courage, and heroism. It stated in part :

We should be proud of our rituals, festivals, religious habits, observance of the ten typical (Hindu) rites, our Kshatriya like self-control and heroism, and also of the fact that the Puranas and the Ithasas have described us as Kshatriyas. But we must raise our community from the present miserable situation to the glorious level of the past.

Also in 1935, a large Samaj meeting was convened by Dinabandhu at which the Bhumij were implored to stop ploughing with cows, drinking rice-beer, eating fowl, practicing levitic marriage widow remarriage, and group dances by women. *Gurus* and *purohits* should be employed at marriage and funeral rites, and the holy texts should be read often. If the Bhumij do these things and in general try to educate themselves, it was promised that they would once again rise to the "past glorious status of true Kshatriyas". Two Brahmans had been invited to the meeting and they also gave testimony of the genuine Kshatriya status of the Bhumij.

Dinabandhu and the other leaders of the Bhumij Kshatriya movement then set out on a comprehensive reform program in which they supervised *zemindars* or local headmen who put the program to work at the village level. They collected money to carry out the program, but unfortunately the leaders of the movement could not resist the temptation to expropriate some or all of the funds for themselves. A great deal of this money was collected in the form of fines, which were imposed for alleged violations of the code of the movement, and these fines soon became a burden to the people.

These evils notwithstanding, the Bhumij tolerated the activities of the movement during 1935 and 1936. In the latter year, unusally

fine crops were attributed by the people to the reform program However, in 1937 a severe droughts plus a smallpox epidemic caused wide-spread suffering, and the current state of things was generally attributed to the negligence of the traditional rite of fowl sacrifice during the Sarhul festival, and the termination of group dances by women. There was an effort made to resume these rituals and discourage the reform. "In the spring of 1937, when associate of Dinabandhu Singh went to the village of Khokio to stop group dancing—they were attacked with bows and arrows............".

Simultaneous with these extempoianeous actions of the people a rumor was spread that Dinabandhu's own mother, a much respected woman in the *Taraf*, had communicated to the people her desire to see the keeping of fowls resumed. Despite these reactions, many of the reforms stuck, and it is significant that such things as ploughing with cows and group dancing by women have been abolished completely. Sarhul festival is still observed albeit somewhat cladestinely and in modified forms. Brahman priests and *gurus* are employed almost universally. Widow remarriage and the levirate, to which the movement was also opposed, were not abondoned however, and rice-bear is still drunk.

In general, the Bhumij Kshatriya movement seems to be of a type quite different than the ones previously described Revitilization takes the form of identification with the surrounding society rather than resisting it, but it has been successful only at a very superficial level. Sinha has noted that despite the implementation of reforms, the Bhumij have not been accepted by most of the local Hindu castes as Kshatriyas or as anything approaching such a high rank. In the short run, the mere alternation of ritual habits is no more successful in raising the status of a group than is open rebellion in resisting the incursions of an alien society. But in the long run, it is apparent that such attempts by the members of a society to adjust to a contact situation, or to re-align themselves socially within the total framework of the larger society are important revitalization mechanisms.

In the next section I shall attempt to structure the various movements outlined above in terms of the current anthropological perspective provided by Coser, Linton, Redfield, Govet, Wallace, and others, and to interpret them in terms of their roles as mediators between the Great and Little Traditions of India.

The Dynamics of Revitalization Movements.

It is apparent that the movements just reviewed are quite diverse in nature and for that reason cannot be classified under any

such limited term as "nativistic," "messianic," or "reformist." For this reason, the broader term "revitalization" recently proposed by Wallace has been employed in this paper. "A revitalization movement *is defined as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort* by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace 1956 : 265). Wallace (pp. 268–75) further provides us with a series of processes through which all revitalization movements are supposed to pass. First there is what he terms the "Steady State" or period of cultural stability during which a given culture is operating on a tolerably efficient level so that internal stress never reaches disorganizing proportions. At some point, the culture becomes inefficient in its role of satisfying individual needs, producing increased stress and a tendency toward disorganization. One possible stress-producing factor is an acculturational situation and this is obviously the condition under which many of the revitalization movements just described have arisen. This period is termed by Wallace "The Period of Increased Individual Stress," and leads directly to the next stage in the process, or "The Period of Cultural Distortion" This period is characterized by the distortion of the structure of the culture and often by the individual's attempt to alter his position in the structure. Neglecting for the moment Wallace's concept of "mazeway" as an individuals mental image of his total society and culture, we can proceed to the next step in the process : "The Period of Revitalization" It is during this period that one or more of a variety of movements may be organized by individuals in the culture in an attempt to provide a new and better life for all. These movements are often religious in character (p. 270), but they may also be quasi-political or militaristic, as we have just seen in the case of tribal India.

It is on the periods of "Increased Individual Stress" and that of "Cultural Distortion" that I would like to focus attention. Wallace's main emphasis is on the psychological aspects of the conditions in these periods ; I would like to stress sociological factors in an attempt to discover the nature of the conditions that give rise to revitalization movements.

It is unfortunate that early accounts of such movements among the tribes just discussed do not provide more material on preceding cultural conditions. Government officials and other writers consistently emphasized economic distress, but it is doubtful whether this was the only factor involved. It is significant, for instance, that the Santhal rebellion was not directed against five castes that were "obedient to the Santals and helped them in several ways" (Datta

1940 : 16). This seems to indicate that the Santals by 1855 were interacting with the surrounding Hindu and Moslem society. Landlordism, though a crucial factor, was probably part of a whole complex of factors operating in each of these tribal areas. The extensive borrowing from Hinduism by the Bhagat movement also illustrates this point. And the attempt by the Bhumij to identify with the Kshatriya caste, plus a detailed description of Hindu-Bhumij contact by Surajit Sinha at a recent seminar on India, also illustrate it[3]. The Bhumij are surrounded by society; they participate in some Hindu festivals and observe others, they attend local markets and make pilgrimages to holy places; and they employ degarded Brahmans in certain ceremonies. It should not be too wildly speculative to suggest that similar conditions prevailed at the time the Birsa and Bhagat movements were organized, though the contact was probably not so pervading. A total contact situation, therefore, seems to be one necessary prerequisite for the rise of revitalistic movements. As has been pointed out by Linton (1943 : 234) such situations often involve two societies of different status, so that one is dominant, the other subordinate. This seems to have been true of every case discussed above Hindus (and / or Moslems) had the advantage of economic power and high prestige, while the tribal cultures were subordinate in their economic role and greatly inferior in practice.

An important feature of some revitalistic movements resulting from an acculturative situation which is not stressed by Linton is the borrowing of elements from the dominant culture. This is very evident in the Bhagat Movement among the Oraons where the new indeology was greatly influenced by the high prestige culture. Such borrowings, it was hoped, would raise the status of the subordinate group in the eyes of Hindu society as a whole. In this way the tribals attempted to put themselves on an equal footing with the Hindus and reduce the degree of subordination under which they suffered. Some mechanism by which tribal group may profitably emulate the culture of Hindu society seems to be a prerequisite to revitalization movements of the Bhagat-Bhumij-Kshatriya type.

Without such a mechanism, it appears that revitalization movements assume a different form. The Santal insurrection and such movements as the Sardar type emphasized the continuity of tradition and the distinctiveness of aboriginal culture as opposed to Hindu culture. It also seems reasonable that the earlier revolts of 1820 and 1832 against Hindu landlords and Moslem traders among the Mundas were expressions of resistance to alien cultures and borrow-

ed very little from them. Sometimes the theme of returning to something old and original runs through movements of the emultative type, as with the *Kurukh Dharam* among the Oraons, but even here the strong influence of Hinduism is very notable.

It might be useful to summarize the revitalization movements just described under two general headings : resistance movements and emulative movements.

Resistance movements arise when (1) an acculturative situation develops between a dominant and a subordinate culture ; (2) subordination involves excessive economic exploitation and social degradation ; (3) there is a minimum of social integration between the two groups ; and (4) barriers to successful emulation of the dominant culture are present. Emulative movements arise when (1) an acculturative situation has developed between a dominant and a subordinate culture but is well advanced ; (2) subordination involved lack of prestige but not excessive economic exploitation ; (3) there is a maximum of social integration between the two cultures, though boundaries are still maintained between them ; and (4) there are no barriers to successful emulation of the dominant culture.

These conditions are all involved in the culture contact situation and cut across Wallace's "Period of Increased Individual Stress" and that of "Cultural Distortion." They involve the social, encomic, and ideological factors that give rise to the psychological stress experienced by individuals during these periods. "It is... .....functionally necessary for every person in society to maintain a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of his own body and its behavioral regularities, in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the system" (Wallace 1956 : 266). This image is called the "mazeway". During "The Period of Increased Individual Stress," individual personalities suffer from the pressure of social disorganization ; there is a "continuous dimunition" in the culture's ability to satisfy needs. "While the individual can tolerate a moderate degree of increased stress and still maintain the habitual way of behavior, a point is reached at which some alternative way must be considered" (p. 269). During the ensuing "Period of Cultural Distortion," individuals of relatively flexible personality "try out various limited mazeway changes in their personal lives, attempting to reduce stress by addition or substitution of mazeway elements with more or less concern for the *Gestalt* of the system" (p. 269). It is at this point that regressive techniques such as alcoholism, extreme passivity and indolence, and the development of highly ambivalent dependency relationships are often exhibited. It is the next period, that of

"Revitalization," that is characterized by the rise of organized movements to alter the existing mazeway (p. 270).

As we have seen, the development of the *jagirdar* system among the Mundas resulted in economic and social degradation ; this in turn produced acute individual stress which subsequently led to "cultural distortion" in which the elements of culture "are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interferring" (p 269). Thus, the tribal peoples all went through a period in which the time-honored way of cultivating the land was no longer successful as a response to economic needs, because the products of labor were expropriated "locally" by *jagirdars* and *thiccadars*—the alien landlords. During the ensuing "Period of Revitalization," therefore, the landlords were attacked and threatened with destruction. The Santals, during this period, actually tried to set up a government of their own. Such a move would only occur in a situation where no new social structure had been established and the roles of landlords and tenant were not clearly defined. Under such conditions, attempts at emulation of the dominant culture were impossible, as social disorganization was too great. True, the Tana Bhagat movement among the Oraons advocated nonpayment of rent and abondoning of the ploughing of land, but the movement drew a great deal from Hindu culture, and the idea of kindness to animals furnished the rationale for stopping the practice of using animals in the fields. Even the emphasis on returning to the imagined "original" Oraon religion was expressed largely in terms of prescriptions for behavior that would raise their status in the eyes of the Hindus, such as worship through *bakhti*, abolition of drinking intoxicants, eating meat and so forth.

In time, the tribal peoples came to be regarded more as an integral part of the wider society, and movements such as Bhagat and Bhumij Kshatriya illustrate this. These movements, as just noted, are characterized by large-scale incorporation of Hindu elements into them in an effort to raise the status of the group. In such situations, economic exploitation is sometimes present, but mechanisms for dealing with it have been established and open rebellion is unnecessary. Moreover, economic exploitation is seldom as acute and cannot in itself be considered essential to the rise of movements such as the Bhagat. The economic system among the Bhumij appears to be relatively smooth-functioning, and yet a revitalization movement is present.

Both resistance and emulative type movements appear to satisfy the condition of "deliberate, organized conscious efforts........ to construct a more satisfying culture. "Both types have resulte

from acculturative situations which have produced periods of "Increased Individual Stress" and "Cultural Distortion." But the latter have differed in character for each type, the resistance type arising *when established channels of protest and reform* are blocked, and the emulative type arising when such channels are open. In the first case, the two societies are separate, distinct, and not, functionally integrated ; in the second case, they are well integrated and may almost be considered parts of a single society. It should be noted further that neither resistance nor emulative movements are purely of one type. The Birsa movement, for instance, contained elements of both resistance and emulation. It was perhaps predominantly of the resistance type, organizing violent attacks on landlords and Christian Mundas, but it was also characterized by the preaching of ethical and religious doctrines that were borrowed largerly from Hinduism and Christianity. Similarly, some of the Bhagat movements contain elements of resistance, such as nonpayment of landlords, but still are predominantly in character with their emphasis on *bhakti* and ceremonial purity.

The Classification of Revitalization Movements

Nativistic Movements :—It should be obvious from the foregoing that Linton's scheme is too narrow to include all the elements of the movements under discussion, as useful as it is for the characterization of one special type—the nativistic movement.

Nativistic movements are defined by Linton as "any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetutate selected aspects of its culture (1943 : 320), and have been classified by him under a four-fold scheme (pp. 231–34). They may be either revivalistic or perpetuative in emphasis and may be magical or rational in type. Revivalistic movements attempt to revive extinct or moribund elements of a culture, while perpetuative movements seek to maintain current elements of culture. Magical nativism involves the use of supernatural techniques, and is often messianic in nature. "They usually originate with some individual who assumes the role of prophet and is accepted by the people because they wish to believe" (p 232). Rational nativism involves the use of symbols "chosen realistically and with regard to the possibility of perpetuating them under current conditions" (p. 233). Thus, nativistic movements may be either revivalistic-magical, revivalistic-rational, *perpetuative-magical, or perpetuative-rational.*

Reformative Movements :—If we examine the particular movements that are the subject of this paper in terms of this definition

and classification, we are at once struck by the inadequacy of the phrase an "attempt to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture" in describing them. The resistance movements may fall under this heading, but the fit is not a good one Emulative movements do not fall under this heading at all; on the contrary, some are almost anti-nativistic in character. All of these movements draw heavily from the dominant culture and consequently do not seek only to revive or perpetuate aspects of their own culture For this reason it might be worthwhile to apply the term "reformative" to these movements. Reformative nativism has been defined as "a relatively conscious attempt on the part of a subordinated group to attain a personal and social reintegration through selective rejection, modification, and synthesis of both traditional and alien (dominant) cultural components" (Voget 1956 : 250).

This fusion of alien and native cultural components is strongly evident in most of the movements of an emulative type that we have just described. The Bhagat movements, for example, have borrowed heavily from Hinduism and even to some extent from Christianity. Insofar as these movements have borrowed from Christianity they illustrate an exception to Voget's definition of reformative. The word dominant might almost be removed in this respect because Christianity was scarcely a dominant culture in any of these situations. But it *was* alien. And among the Santals, at least, the railway workers might constitute a dominant group. Another condition of some interest in this connection is, the exorcism of symbols of European technology which are thought of as evil spirits among the Oraons. It is possible that this tribe was in sufficient enough contact with the British during the time when the Bhagat movement started, to consider them a "dominant" culture. There is not enough data on the Munda and Santal movements to tell whether such contact was extensive and the Bhumij were studied after the British had left. In general, it seems consistent with the data to say that Christian elements were borrowed and used in a revitalistic manner, although Christianity did not participate in a dominant-subordinate cultural relationship.

Classification of Revitalization Movements in India :—We are now in a position to classify the various movements among the four tribes under discussion. Among the Mundas, the early Vaisnavite movement was of the emulative type, but it was apparently quite limited in scope, and there is very little data available about it. Insofar as it drew material from Hindu culture it can be regarded as reformative. The revolts of 1820 and 1832 were resistive (nativistic)

in character and to the best of our information primarily perpetuative rational. Subsequent trends toward Christianity seem to indicate movements away from nativism, but the general character of letter movements among the Mundas is primarily resistive.

The *sardar* movement was primarily nativistic in character, emphasizing its apartness from Hinduism, and its ancient claims on the land. There is no evidence that it contained many supernatural elements, although its leaders were nominally Christians at first. It seems to have been of the revivalistic-rational type.

The following Birsa movement began in a way typical of nativistic movements, with Birsa Munda obtaining a prophetic vision. But it incorporated so many elements of Hindu religion, such as the emphasis on piety, cleanliness, abstention from meat eating, and the wearing of the sacred thread, that it must be considered as primarily reformative in nature. In discussing reformative movements among American Indians, Voget (1956 : 250–59) outlines some of the typical features found in them. One of these is called "prophetic revelation and legitimacy." Thus, the Birsa movement was legitimized by drawing from tenets of the Hindu faith, and it originated in a prophecy. Another typical characteristic is "healing the Body" and healing was an important part of Birsa's religion. Typically too, was its forward-looking characteristic and its opposition to purely nativistic tendencies. Thus, Birsa stressed purity of thoughts and actions among the Mundas even while organizing open revolts. The Mundas were to build a better life by repelling economic oppressors and making themselves ceremonially pure. In Linton's sense this movement was unrealistic and of a "magical nature". But its lack of emphasis on aboriginal culture and its strong tendencies toward emulation of the Hindus make it difficult to classify as nativistic.

The Santal movement was also rooted in revelation and prophecy. The brothers Sidhu and Kannu obtained a vision of Thakur in which he appeared *as a white man dressed in native clothes*. This is indeed a vivid way to symbolize the power of the white man His use of native attire probably symbolizes the aboriginal aspiration for power. The Santal movement seems typically nativistic, and of the revivalistic-magical type. There may have been a reformative tendency in it, but the brief account that is available makes no mention of borrowing from Hinduism, and the report of attempts to destroy the Hindu overlords and establish a separate state are emphatically resistive in nature.

The Bhagat movement among the Oraons is the best described of all the movements. The various sects included under this title all

illustrate extensive borrowing from Hinduism in one way or another. The spirits among the various Bhagat movements, especially those among the Tana Bhagats, are very typical of reformative movements, according to Voget (1956 : 257–58). Such splits are often over "pure" versus "diluted, even foreign" ceremonies or practices and are "deep-rooted and persisten" (p. 258) Among the Oraons, the major distinction appears to be between those Bhagats who are strongly Hinduized and those who are relatively aboriginal. Thus a *Bachidan* Bhagat must maintain a full year of ceremonial purity before he can be initiated. Then he may receive the council of a degraded Brahman *guru*, and assume a caste-like existence. On the other hand, certain of the Tana Bhagats are only nominal Bakhti worshippers , they have not given up the use of intoxicants or jewelry and do not employ Brahman *gurus*.

Healing, another "typical" characteristic of reformative movements, is also reported by Roy (1928 : 368–71). Emphasis on character and morality, prophetic revelation and legitimacy, anti-nativism, proselytizing, and concern with social status is also characteristic of reformative movements (Voget 1956 : 250–58). These things are all emphasized by Oraon Bhagats, as we have seen. Voget also maintains that "reformative movements are relatively stable and enduring developments when compared to the short life of 'Ghost Dances' and other revivalistic movements" (p. 259) The enduring character of the Bhagat movements can only be tested empirically with time ; but the kinds of processes involved in it seem by their very nature to indicate stability. The tendency toward adoption of Hindu elements in the religion coupled with the inevitability of incorporation of tribal life into Hindu society, constitute these processes. The Bhagat cult is something more than a passing resistive movement ; it is a long-term mechanism of transformation.

The Bhumij Kshatriya movement appears to be only indirectly religious or "magical" Instead it is a rational reformative movement that emphasizes a glorious future modeled on a mythical past. It is largely political in nature and is unusual in that it did not start with a prophetic vision. But it does contain religious elements, such as the insistence on ceremonial purity, observance of Hindu rites, and abstention from intoxicants and meat eating. It is interesting to note that despite sporadic opposition to its leaders and some dissatisfaction with the reform as a whole, most of the Hindu emulating innovations endured. This seems to indicate that the Bhumij were generally concerned with raising their status and were willing to make sacrifices to do so. This movement, like the Bhagat movement

among the Oraons, is likely to be of genuine and lasting significance.

Summary and Conclusion:—In The Primative World and its Transformations, Professor Redfield (1953 : 80-81) has observed that :

The anthropologist encounters this creativity of the disintegrated folk society in the form of nativistic movements. The impact of civilization upon the primitive societies results in part in the stimulation of new ideas, new religions, and ethical conceptions. In 1899 the Paiute prophet Wodziwob preached the coming and of the world, the destruction of the white man, and the return of the Indian dead. The new believers were to be protected by performing certain rituals. This general doctrine was restated in 1890 by a new prophet, and the Ghost Dance Cult then spread to many Indian peoples all suffering from the disintegration of their old life and the loss of the sense of life's purpose.........

These movements are sometimes seen as wish fulfilments, as projections of a hope of escape from frustration and despair. So, no doubt they are...But also these movements are to be seen as instances of moral creativeness. They represent, in limited and local cases, the power of human intelligence and insight to provide a fresh vision of a moral order.

Redfield's description of the Ghost Dance with the prophet Wodziwob and his doctrine of protection for believers might have been just as easily an account of the Birsa movement among the Mundas. There is no doubt that such movements are "limited and local," but there is another type of movement that is lasting and widespread. The Bhagats movement among the Oraons and the Bhumij Kshatriya among the Bhumij are revitalization movements of a type that can be called "reformative," and which, though borne out of conflict and strife between two societies, eventually take the form of positive forces making for social integration and stability. We can now turn to a consideration of revitalization movements in general, and reformative movements in particular as integrative mechanisms.

Revitalization Movements as Mediators between the Great and Little Traditions

It is noteworthy that even among movements in India of the more narrowly "nativistic" type, including agrarian revolts, the *sardar* and Birsa movements, a certain amount of borrowing from Hindu culture took place. This tendency is even more evident in the reformative movements such as the Bhagat and Bhumij Kshatriya. Reformative movements, on the whole emphasize raising the

status of the subordinate group and consequently act as catalytic agents to the acculturative process. In India two parallel traditions or ways of life have been described as "Great" and "Little" the former being the way of life of orthodox, literate Hindus and that which is outlined in the sacred works of Hinduism—the Vedas, Puranas, etc ; and the latter is the way of life of the simple villager, the folk, and the peasant These two traditions are often in opposition, but are always in interaction. That this is an historical process of some depth is illustrated by the fact that religious symbols such as the trident, and such institutions as worshipping village deities at a sacred grove, were present at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa and were observed among tribal peoples in the Deccan in the nineteenth century as well as among villagers all over India today.[1]

Reformative movements have tended to mediate between the Great and Little Traditions by a process of selective borrowing by the tribals and active proselytizing by the Hindus. In attempting to raise their status, tribal peoples have taken over more and more Hindu ideas and customs. In this sense the reformative movements are part of the general acculturative process by which tribals become Hindus

The Functions of Social Conflict

In a recent and stimulating book, L A. Coser (1956) has emphasized the function of social conflict as a positive, integrating force. Revitalization movements seem to bear out his thesis.

Aside from the actual contents of revitalization movements, the fact of social conflict itself may add to the reorientation of a group, a restructing of relationships within it, and an increase in internal cohesion (Coser 1956 : 87, 151-52). It may also serve to "establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups" (Coser 1956 · 38). Revitalization movements grow out of, and are largely expressions of social conflict ; in these terms we can look at the Indian situation in two ways First, social conflict serves to unify and reorganize the tribal group, thus remedying the conditions that prevail in Wallace's "Period of Cultural Distortion" (1956 · 269). Secondly, it creates a balance between tribal and Hindu society in such a way that a new social system is created and maintained. As an illustration of the latter process, Coser (1956 : 34) cites the example of the Indian caste system in which "conflicts between...... castes may establish the separateness and distinctiveness of the various castes, but may also insure the stability of the total Indian social structure by bringing about a balance of claims by rival castes".

Social conflict may also act to draw societies closer together by providing a prestige model for the subordinate group. "Out groups, *far from necessarily constituting targets of hostility, can also, under* certain conditions, become positive references to the ingroup. The outgroup may be emulated as well as resented" (Coser 1956 : 35-36). This often appears to be the case in situations of class mobility (Coser 1956 : 36), but emulation rarely developes where the system is of a closed caste type. It is therefore significant that emulation has occurred among tribal peoples in India. The system allows enough mobility for a group to rise from the status of "tribe" to that of "caste".

It is impossible to summarize all of Coser's arguments and observations in the space available here, though many of them are pertinent to an understanding of the problems and processes involved in tribal Hindu interaction and conflict. A few of the more vital of Coser's propositions, may, however, be briefly mentioned.

1. *Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within. They are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity (p. 103).*

This proposition seems to be well-illustrated by the strict reinforcement of reforms by the levying of fines among the Bhumij.

2 *Conflict may initiate other types of interaction between antagonists, even previously unrelated antagonists. It also usually takes place within a universe of norms prescribing the forms in which it is to be carried out. Conflict acts as a stimulous for establishing new rules, norms, and institutions, thus serving as an agent of socialization for both contending parties. Furthermore, conflict reaffirms dormant norms and thus intensifies participation in social life.*

As a stimulous for the creation and modification of norms, conflict makes the readjustment of relationships to changed conditions possible (p 128).

This proposition is illustrated by the whole course of revitalization movements in India, which originally took the form of open and violent conflict, but gradually were reduced to more peaceful processes of political action and emulation. In the process, new rules and norms were established for the oppressive Hindu landlords as well as for the violently contending tribals.

Furthermore, new institutions, and norms were created within tribal society by the taking over of elements of the Great Tradition, and by emphasizing real or imagined standards of behaviour already extent in the society.

3. Conflict consists in a test of power between antagonistic parties. Accommodation between them is possible only if each is aware of the relative strength of both parties However, paradoxical as it may seem, such knowledge can most frequently be attained only through conflict, since other mechanisms for testing the respective strength of antagonists seem to be unavailable.

Consequently, struggle may be an important way to avoid conditions of disequilibrium by modifying the basis for power relations (p. 137)

The eventual stabilizing of the relationship between tribals and Hindus and the carrying on of a steady interchange of ideas and practices was possible only through the mechanism of social conflict. Nativistic movements were the necessary forerunners of reformative movements, and reformative movements were necessary to establish a balance of power that would allow a peaceful interaction between cultures. The nativistic movements, such as the agrarian revolts, the Santal insurrection, and the Birsa movement helped the tribals assess the power of Hindu society so that less violent means of contention were chosen for the continuation of the struggle At the same time, the recognition of tribal strength made the Hindus realize that past oppressive practices would have to be avoided.

The most important contribution of Coser's work to this study is the suggestion that social conflict is not always dysfunctional and disorganizing; it can also be functional and organizing. This suggestion appears to be borne out by the relationships which have developed between tribal and Hindu society in India. Social conflict has contributed to the social cohesion of tribal groups and has aided the establishment of a well-defined social system in which both Hindu and tribal groups participate.

Limitations of the Data and Suggestions for Further Research

It is a truism that good research cannot be conducted without a good supply of reliable data. Unfortunately, most ethnologists writing on tribal culture in India have stressed the homogeneous, isolated, distinctive aspects of the culture rather than its place in the total structure of Indian society. More detailed information is needed on the process by which revitalization movements come into being; and better descriptions of these movements, after they are in existence, is also badly needed.

The four tribes discussed in this paper are practically the only ones on which there is any available data concerning revitalization movements. And the limitations of this data are obvious.

The most unsatisfactory aspect of the material is the lack of any information on the general state of culture contact between the two groups. The kind, frequency, and intensity of contacts are not mentioned. Areas of contact other than economic are described only in Roy's book on oraon religion and in Sinha's material. The character of leadership is entirely neglected, and the reader must guess at the types of personalities involved in the various movements. Neither is the scope of the movements described. All these features of the movements could be profitably studied at present and in the near future, for revitalization movements are likely to continue as more tribal areas come into increasing contact with Hinduism.

An interesting study might be undertaken among the Nagas or some other tribe in Assam which is still relatively isolated Processes of change and acculturation could be studied here almost in their infancy. At any rate, a less complex situation might reveal more clearly just what happens in this process of interaction between the Great and Little Traditions. It might also reveal the context within which revitalization movements tend to develop, so that the totality of processes involved can be understood more clearly.

Summary and Conclusions.

Three general periods of historic interaction appear to be involved in the formation of revitalization movements in India. The first of these is the period of initial contact and retreat. During this time tribals try to "leave the field", as the psychologist would say. This was best illustrated by the retreat of the Mundas across India from west to east. A second period is one of contact and resistance, in which interrelationships are so completely unstructured that open rebellion and violence are the only channels of self-expression open to the tribals. A third period might be called that of extended contact and emulation, during which reformative movements arise.

The resistance and emulative movements among four tribes of Bihar have been summarized and discussed. They were found to be mechanisms of acculturation and mediators between the Great and Little Traditions of India, as well as integrating forces for the tribal cultures. They have aided in the structuring of a new social system which includes both tribal and Hindu peoles, and have provided new rules and norms of behavior for both groups which may be said to constitute a new "moral order". (Redfield : 1953)

NOTES

1. "Bhuiphut Bhagats' are holy men or magicians who obtain their power by a vision in which Mahadeo, God, rises from the ground in the shape of a stone or Bhuiphut. The vision is usually obtained while in a state of sleep

or deep contemplation, and the Bhuiphut Mahadeo is often found near at hand when the magician awakens. Such Bhagats seem to be the original kind of Bhagat in Oraon Country.

2. For the following materials I am indebted to Surajit Sinha who gave me access to his unpublished notes on the Bhumij.

3. India Seminar at the University of Chicago, Spring, 1956.

4. A pioneer effort at describing the connections between Indus Valley Civilization and modern Hinduism of the Little Tradition was made by John Marshall in his excavation report of Mohenjo Daro in 1931.

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THE NATURE OF RELIGION OF BIRSA (1895—1900)

Surendra Prasad Sinha

In the history of religion, the teachings of Birsa does not figure; but it is beyond doubt that the closing years of the Nineteenth Century saw Birsa Bhaghwan, propagating a new religion amongst his own community of the Mundas in and around the districts of Ranchi and Singhbhum in the Chotanagpur Division. The purspose of this note is to subjects his preachings to a critical analysis.

A brief description of the reasons that led Birsa to preach his new religion will not be out of place here. During the second half of the 19th century the whole of Chotanagpur was undergoing a treamendous change. The old mundari system of *khuntkatti* tenure was giving way to the new and alien elaborate system of exploitation by the landlords known as *Jagirdars* and *Thicadars*, under whose steam roller the whole indegenous population was being squeezed out. The oppressed aborginals cried and cried in vain but the British administration for one reason or the other did not come to their rescue The economic factors though fundamental in the disputes, were not the only factor generating friction between Mundas and the surrounding people. The landlords belonged to alien culture, and as such were not recognized by the tribal people as a functioning part of their society. The Mundas continually tried to revive the *old khunkatti* system with its *mankis* or native leaders, not only because they sensed in it a more just economic arrangement, but because the *mankis* were of their own people and had behind them the full weight of tradition (Jay : 1961). In between the two parties, that is, Munda on the one hand and their landlord on the other, there were the Christian missionaries who had started conversion by the middle of the 19th century. They feinlly promised that they could get their old lands and forests restored to them if they embraced Christianity. In no time large number of Mundas were brought into the fold of Christianity ; but they were disillusioned. They were shocked at this breach of faith and found themselves landed in deep waters. They had been ejected from their hearth and home, they were on starvation level, and over and above all, they had gained nothing by changing their faith. The whole Munda country was seething with discontent. In the meantime they got an able leader in Birsa Munda of Chalkad. The year, 1895 marked the beginning of a movement of considerable importance when Birsa assumed the leadership of the oppressed

Mundas. In him Mundas found the embodiment of their aspiration and Birsa fulfilled their expectation by giving them a leadership, a religion and a code of life, and held before them a prospect of Munda Raj in place of Maharani Victoria's Raj.

But propagating a new religion by Birsa was not apparently accidental and curious as Sri S. C. Roy has brought out (Roy 1912 ; 326). Rather Birsa was a product of circumstances. Environment shaped his ideas and circumstances made him the leader of his people. Born in a very poor family in or about 1874 in Gureria Ulihatu in Tamar Police Station of the Khunti Sub division the little Birsa was a burden to his parents who sent him to mother's native place from where his mother's sister took him to Khatanga. Here he came into the contact with the Christian missionaries who taught inquisitive Birsa the art of reading and writing But from there also he had to flee to take shelter under the kind patronage of a learned Brahman Pandit named Anand Pandey, where he used to work for the whole day in his *Guru's field and took lessons in the evening (Tiru ; n.d. : 4).* The Guru used to recite stories of the valour of Ram, Lakshman, Bhima and Arjun which impressed Birsa much and helped him in his character building. The Guru was very happy with Birsa who was industrious, honest, hardworking and keen student. Birsa also visited Bomhani where he came into contact with a reputed *vaishnava* saint who was giving discourses on Bhakti. He was so much influenced by the doctrine of non-violence preached by that saint that he gave up hunting and non-vegetarian food (Sachchidananda : 1954 : 121). *Birsa was a youngman of unusual strength and charm. He was adept* in playing on a flute. He could not live with his Guru for long, he left Guaribeıoa for Khatanga. On the way he met a preacher of German Mission who took him to Burju where he passed Upper Primary standard. Then he was sent to Chaibbasa where he did his Middle standard. But his restless spirit was stifled in the atmosphere at Mission schools where abuses were hurled on his religion and culture. *Hence one day Birsa left school to live with his parents at* Chalkad, the village where they had emigrated.

Thus Birsa started a life of a unfortunated wanderer from one place to another. He got his training in three R's by the missionaries and heard them speak on Christian religion. So Christian virtues and ideas taught by the preachers left an abiding influence on him. But he also came into contact with a learned *sanatani* Pundit named Anand Pandey from whom he learnt about the character of Ram, Lakshman, Bhim, Krishna and Arjun. Pandey's *recital no doubt impressed the young mind of Birsa and aroused in*

him the ambition to become Ram or Krishna who fought against oppressive demons of their time. The Vaishnava saint also left Birsa a strong believer in non-violent creed. Imbued with these virtue he got English education at Mission School. Now Birsa was a changed man. His schooling and wandering left him pondering over the question of maladies from which his community was suffering and he could find out the dark spots in his own culture and the reasons of their hard fate. To remove those dark spots he started his preaching and to end the oppression by the landlord he gave a clarion call for a revolt. So religion of Birsa was meant to end the misery of his community. It was the means to an end.

"The religion of Chotanagpur tribes was a crude system of spiritism or animism with a strong belief in magic and witchcraft" (Roy : Jobor 1931). Mundas were steeped in ignorance, worshipped many spirits and godlings.[1] They followed various taboos and totems. They buried the deads in grave with some valuables like silver ornaments etc. They used to sacrifice animals to appease Gods. Birsa revolted against this system because that form of religion was not giving him peace and it totally demonstrated its inefficiency before him. For him this was the period, which the anthropologists termed as "The period of increased individual stress" when at some point the culture becomes inefficient in its role of satisfying individual needs, producing increased stress and a tendency towards disorganisation and this state of affairs led Birsa directly to the next stage in process or "The period of cultural distortion" which was characterised by the distortion of the structure of the culture and his attempt to alter his position in the structure. And naturally "the period of Revitilization" started when Birsa organised a movement in an attempt to provide a new and better life for his oppressed community. That movement was religious in character but later assumed quasi-political and militaristic shape. (Jay : 1961 : 62–63)

The Mundas had Hindu and Christian societies around them, dominant societies, with an advantage of greater economic power and high prestige. Naturally Birsa borrowed extensively from the dominant cultures only to raise the status of his subordinate group. Therefore, Birsa in his teachings forbade the taking of wine and other intoxicants including haria and non vegetarian food and laid emphasis on cleanliness etc. He asked his followers to use the sacred thread and stressed purity of heart at the time of worship. He advised them to eschew violence and to give up animal sacrifice. In place of the worship of innumerable spirits and godlings, Birsa asked his followers to follow only one God Sing-Bonga—"the ever

beneficent God of Gods, by whose appointment the inferior deities hold their places and perform functions—and who is, in fact, the Author of the whole universe including the whole host of the these bongas themselves (Roy : 1912 : 470). So Birsa preached Monotheism among people propitiating numerous deities and spirits. He thought that buildings were not needed for worship and retained the worship of *Singbonga* in the traditional *Sarna*, the sacred grove of the village. (Sachchidananda : 1954 · 121) He also wrote a book of prayer and used to perform *Harikirtan* which attracted his earliest followers.

If we look at the psychological aspects of the conditions in that period or the sociological factors that led to the organization of Birsa religion—one thing looms large in our mind—*e. g.* the economic distress or landlordism was a crucial part of a whole complex of factors operating in those days. The development of Jagirdar system among Mundas resulted in economic and social degradation and this in turn produced acute individual stress which subsequently led to "Cultural distortion" in which the elements of culture "are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering." (Jay 1961 .). Thus the tribal peoples all went through a period when cultivation of land was no longer useful to keep them fed (because the products of labour were expropriated locally by Jagirdars and Thicadars, the alien landlords) and therefore during the period of Revitilization the landlords and their supporters were attacked and threatened with destruction. "Birsa asked his followers to give up cultivation and gather at Chalkad" and by this perhaps he wanted to fully non cooperate with the landlords in matter of production.[2]

Birsa's religion began in a way of typical nativistic movements, with Birsa Munda obtaining a prophetic vision duting his course of meditation. But it incorporated so many elements of Hindu religion already discussed above, like the emphasis on piety, cleanliness, abstention from meat eating and the wearing of sacred thread. This must be considered as primarily reformative in nature and in such reformative movement this typical feature of "prophetic revealation and legitimacy" is usually found. Gautam Budha also had vision, Jesus Christ also had revealation, Muhammad too received instructions from Allah and so did Birsa. Thus, the Birsa religion was legitimized by drawing from the tenets of the Hindu and the Christian religions and it also originated in a prophecy. Another typical characteristic of such reformative movement is "healing the body" and naturally Birsa professed to cure any disease and to raise the

dead also. This was one of the reasons that he could catch the eyes of his people all over the Munda country. Inspite of the inclement weather and tideous journey of forests and hills, the lame, the halt, the blind, the sick came in shoals to Birsa to be healed (Roy 1912: 329). Whenever there was a visitation of epidemic Birsa's hand was there to nurse the sick and slowly but silently Birsa himself came to be regard as a person possessing some magic in his touch. Birsa was very sincere in his service towards his community and work of reform. It might be that faith and confidence in him mounted so high in every tribal heart, that the whole of the Munda population came under his sway for some time. Every one was eager to have his' darshan'[3], soon his people came to regard him as '*Bhagwan*' or God himself although he himself proclaimed that he was prophet of the *Sing bonga.* Dharti Aba or father of the world was a favourite name applied to Birsa by his disciples.

Thus Birsa movement contained the elements of both resistance and emulation. It was perhaps predominantly of resistance type, organising violent attack on landlords and Christian Mundas but it was also characterised by the preaching of ethical and religious doctrines that were borrowed largely from Hinduism and Christianity.

Birsa also used supernatural techinques like the prediction of the coming deluge when the only dry spot would be that of a hill at Chalked where he lived, that his body had changed into gold, that he could cure all disease and raise the dead also, that the sprinkling of *Bir-da* would make his follower warriors invincible, that the bullets and powder magazine and the Government armed force would turn into water and that even if he was taken away by the authorities to the jail, he could return within three days leaving a log of wood in his place in the jail. To convince his followers of his possessing supernatural powers, he used to chant some *mantras* in a style of a *ohja.* Therefore Birsa religion was of course a nativistic religion but it was magical nativism and messanic in character.

Thus till the year 1895 Birsa was preparing the ground and was equipping his men with a strong character to enable them to give a stubborn fight against the oppressive landlords, Christian missionaries and British officials. We never find Birsa engaging his people in actual fight with his avowed enemies. But he was non-cooperating with the landlords. Even when Birsa Bhagwan was arrested by Mr. Meares, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ranchi his followers, though in overwhelming number did not commit violence and the great feat of arresting Birsa Bhagwan was accomplished without ny fuss. His followers pressed the government officials to send

them also to jail in order to live with their father, Dhartiaba. Again when Mr. Meares saw Birsa in his confinement he told him plainly that he was discussing religious matter only and as such he did not break the law. Therefore the first phase of Birsa religion was to prepare peacefully his people for a greater object which was none than the rebellion of Dec. 1899.

After his release in 1897 Birsa atonce engaged himself with the task of reorganising his adherents and followers and in no time he had a large following. Now he was planning for a general revolt against the landlords, mission people and the government itself. Even while organizing the revolt Birsa stressed purity of thought and action among Mundas. He wanted the Mundas to build a better life by repelling economic oppressors and making them ceremonially pure. He exhorted his people in his nocturnal meetings to make bows and arrows and baluas only to fight injustice. A force was built. Birsa was then not only their Bhagwan or lawgiver, but a dynamic leader looking after their training, organising and morale Birsa was a polititician leading his people to the goal of their self rule.

It is needless to say that revolt was suppressed by killing as many as 400 to 500 people on Dumari Hill and Birsa was also captured along with his eight important associates. Several got hanging, but Birsa died in jail awaiting his trial.

But it is a fact that practically the whole Munda country rose against the British government and went under the banner of Birsa. The secenes of active revolt were at Khunti, Ranchi, Chakradharpur, Bundu, Tamar, Karra, Torpa, Basia, Sisai etc. Khunti was their headquarter. A very large number of troops and volunteers were used to suppress the revolt and this confidently speaks the importance, the rising of Birsa assumed. Practically whole of Chotanagpur was rocked by the Birsaits and so great was the fear inspired that certain vested interests were raising volunteers in far off Jharia and Prulia.

Thus the essence of Birsa movement had been destroyed when Birse shaked off his mortal coil, a great life every minute of which was spent for betterment of the lot of the people he loved had gone. But Munda unrest continued and is still continues. Series of laws had been passed by the British Government but they have proved to be simple eye wash. In the wake of Swarajya, social work agencies, started their work of rehabilitating the tribal people, and now they claim to have succeeded in giving the much needed relief, the administration think that much has been done, so it is in their reports and blue prints But still the tribals are voiceless, they hardly gesticulate, though they want to be heard, but the drum of publicity stiffle the

voice of unrest and agony (Majumdar 1959 . 90). They still feel the utility of leaders like Birsa and Birsa still is theme of their songs and folklore. When children are Christened, the name Birsa is a favourite with parents. His followers still spreading in the districts of Ranchi and Singhbhum believe that he will come back to live once more

NOTES

1. If we look at the Munda panthcology we will find array of gods, good or bad with the presiding dieties sing Bonga at its uppex. Sri S. C Roy had compiled a list of those gods and had also classified them in his '*Munda and their country*' pp, 467—69.

I. Sing Bonga—the supreme God, creator of all, ruler of all Bongas.

II. Hata Bongako, Desauli Bonga, Jaher Biru and Chandi Bonga—deceased ancestor village deities.

III. Manita Bonga, Churin, Muas, Apsans, Hankar Bonga, Nasan Bonga earth bound spirit

IV. Buru Bonga (nature God in Hill), Ikir Bonga and the Noga Era-spirit ahd nature god.

V. Achrael Bonga-Guardian angel Mundari deities.

2. Jag Mohan Singh, Zamindar of Bandgaon—his pention to the Govt Biraa Movement, Pol. 1895.

3. Similar is the case of Devi in Dr. Majumdar. The light that failed (?) Journal of Social Research, Vol. II No. 1—2 March- Sept 59.

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CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURAL PROCESSES AMONG THE ORAON OF RANCHI

K. N. Sahay

The paper mainly based on the study of two convert villages, one belonging to the Roman Catholic Mission and the other Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Mission proposes to suggest certain processes of change among the Oraon of Ranchi District owing to christianity. Christianity has been one of the important factors of culture change among the tribes of Chotanagpur[1]. This process of change has started with the advent of the first Lutheran Missionaries over this plateau in 1845. It gained momentum under the British patronage and has been an important agency of change among the Adivasi of Bihar during the last one hundred years But unfortunately uptil now no systematic study of this problem has been attempted by any scholar. The present author has endeavoured to bring out certain important features of the working of christianity in two Oraon village with a view to understand inductively, certain general principles of acculteration relating to christianity in tribal area.

In the light of Malinowski's concept of culture (Malinowski : 1945) it has been examined as to how the indigenous culture of the Oraon which worked as an integrated whole, has undergone transformation under the impact of christianity. What are the processes of change ? How far the replacement of one particular aspect of the Oraon culture has disturbed its other related aspects ? How far the indigenous culture has been readjusted, reorganised or persisted in the new set up ? These are some of the questions which need to be answered in order to understand the entire process of acculturation among the Oraon.

The investigator, however, is aware of the limitations of his paper as the study of culture change, in general, is a vast subject and it is not possible to deal with all aspects of impact in such a short paper. It has been possible here to touch only the main points without giving full ethnographic details to substantiate them. Further, for the analysis of change both the denominations of Roman Catholic and Lutheran Mission has been considered as one single unit against the indigenous culture of the Oraon. The base line data regarding the indigenous culture has been mainly drawn from the two monographs of S. C. Roy (1915, 1928).

Villages where the present study was conducted, are Silphari

and Jadi. Silphari is about one hundred and twelve miles North—West from Ranchi City in Chainpur Police Station, and is predominently inhabited by the Roman Catholic Oraon converts having 53 households of Oraon converts, and 9 households of the Munda, Lohar, Gayar, and Chick Baraik Communities. The second village Jadi is about one hnndred and two miles from Ranchi City in the same direction and falls in Raidih Police Station, adjacent to Chainpur. It is predominently a Luthuren Oraon convert village having 54 households of Oraon converts and the rest 52 of the non-christians viz, Rautiya, Chick Baraik, Kumhar, Munda, Turi, Lohar and Korwa.

The field work at Silphari was conducted intermitently from April to September 1956 and then from October 1959 to January 1960. The field work at Jadi was conducted from January to May, 1960. Participant and non participant observations, focussed interviews, questionnaires, genealogical method, and census were some of the chief field techniques.

Brief History of conversion in the two villages.

Old informants and their geneaologies tell us that conversion took place at Silphari sometimes in the last decade of the 19th century, and two Roman Catholic priests Father Lievens and Father Cardon baptised the villagers. Some of my old informants who remembered about their Baptisation told me how the villagers were oppressed by the landlords and were forced to do *begāri* labour. We know from their biographies that they suffered a lot at the hands of the landlords and Police Officials. They took them to distant places as porters for their luggage without any payment. They were afraid of Police and used to run away after seeing them No one would dare resist the forced labour and if anybody did it he was harassed in many ways. If a landlord was very displeased and irritated with the villagers, he would file a suit against them at the slightest pretext. Just when the people were suffering in this way, my informant said, Father Lievens came among them, listened to their grievances and extended his all possible support to the people by backing their cases in the court. This attracted large crowds of people and they also began to come in the fold of Christianity because they had found some one who could fight for their cause.

The converts' Image about Christianity.

The converts usually say that their forefathers were the worshippers of Ghosts and Spirits, they were highly superstitious, and were groping in the darkness till they came in contact with the

Missionaries and their religion. One educated convert said "the non-christian Oraon have been living in the midst of jungles and are always afraid of the spirits and Ghosts supposed to inhabit the land. Out of fear, they would smear vermilion to stones or to some other objects, and sacrifice fowls to appease them. They worship no God. It is just a nature worship and cannot be strictly called a religion". The other informant observed "the Oraon were superstitutous pagan. Christianity has brought the good message of Christ and the light of truth among them and thus it showed the people the path of eternal life". An old informant remarked "during pre-conversion days the Oraon were no better than animals, they did not know to read and write, and worshipped only the spirits. It was the credit of the Missionaries that our people were made educated. They gave us a lot not only through the Christian religion but also looked after our temporal needs. They opened schools and persuaded us to send our children there and also established many other useful institutions like hospitals, graneries, banks, etc". Another convert showed his gratefulness to the missionaries as "it were they who saved their people from the clutches of the oppressing Zamindars and kindled the light of God in their hearts." This convert firmly believed that "One day the whole world will be converted to Christianity as Lord Jesus desired it, and it is the only true religion".

With the acceptance of Christianity the entire religious set-up of the village has undergone a complete transformation. The old deities and spirits have fallen into disuse and the converts have got a new set of religious concept The converts believe in the concept of trinity. They believe that God is one but he has got the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit combined into one. Among the Catholic converts, there is a short dedication prayer in the name of these three, which is recited at the beginning and the end of nearly all the prayers. While reciting this short dedication prayer one goes on making a sign of cross on his body and then concluding folds his hands and says *Amen*. It has a great significance in the life of a convert. He recites it several times in a day especially when he begins and ends a work, or before and after his meals. Some religious-minded converts do it even before drinking water.

Some informants narrated how at times they were encountered by spirits during night and their sincere utterance of these lines accompanied with other prayers of God and Mary made the spirits fly away They said "as one makes a cross sign on his body, the spirit cannot bear its sight and it disappears." The converts believe that God is the creator of heaven and earth. His only Son Jesus Christ

came to this world from his heavenly Father to save the sinners, and he sacrificed himself on the Cross. He is now sitting in the heaven with his father God. The converts usually say "holy spirit is the essence of God which discends down upon a person at the time of his Baptization, and turns him from a weak, sinful person to a spiritual being."

The Catholic converts attach a great importance to Saint Mary the virgin mother of Christ. In almost all the households of Silphari a picture or an image of Saint Mary is seen hanging over the wall. In the village Church as well an image of Mary finds prominance at the altar. There is a special prayer dedicated to Mary, which is recited along with every sort of other religious prayers. One of the informants expressed that "Mary is the mother of God. One who wants any favour from God must also pray to Mary, as being His mother, if she asks her son to help some body, the son will not deny." In his prayers a convert requests mother Mary to pray to God on his behalf. At Silphari there is a special shrine devoted to Mary. This shrine is called Grotto, where the villagers hold Church prayer in the evening throughout the month of May. In the same month, a particular day is fixed when the village is visited by a priest who leads the evening procession to the Grotto. People carry lighted candles in their hand and it is known as "the procession of light" (Billi-Yatra). In the procession, people go on praying which continues for some time at Grotto. The priest preaches sermon and the village boys and girls arrange some dramatic performances on themes related to Bible or social reform. Next morning, a mass is arranged and the priest is seen off after a hearty welcome.

There are some other saints too whom a Catholic convert shows reverence. They are believed to possess special powers, and persons having a particular need should pray to a particular Saint. I was informed that there were different saints to protect one from fire, the other from snake, another from water, still another from seduction or theft *etc.* In his biography a convert narrated an interesting evidence which indicates how with the help of Saint Antonis Guide one of his friends was able to receive his lost article.

Church Net-work

In the non-christian Oraon villages *Pahan* or the *Baiga* was the religious head and for any religious activities and guidance the villagers mainly depended on him. The entire religious net-work was confined to the village and in this sense every village worked independently. But with the introduction of Christianity the whole religious

net-work has changed and it has got much wider extensions now. In most cases, a convert village has got its own village Church (Girja) but where the number of convert is small they go to some neighbouring villages for their Sunday Church prayer. Normally (in this area) the village or villages with such a church constitute the smallest religious and administrative unit. This unit is headed by a catechist (Pracharak), who remains in the village, and conducts Church prayers on Sundays and on other festive occasions. He looks after the religious and social life of the people and his words also carry weight in the village Panchayat. Other religious divisions of the Catholic converts above a village are Parish, Bhikhariat, Diocese, Arch-diocese, Cardinal, and then Papacy. Pope is the highest authority of the Roman Catholic denomination. Silphari has got its own Church made of mud walls. The catechist is local and the village comes under Katkahi Parish which is nearly four miles away from the village. The Head of the Parish is called Parish Priest, who is in frequent contact with the villagers.

Lutheran churches are more or less autonomous. The German Missionaries who came to Chotanagpur in the beginning were repatriated by the British Government during the first world war. Consequently the Lutheran Church was declared autonomous in the year 1919 and was registered by the name of "G. E. L. Church of Chotanagpur and Assam" (Lakra, 1952 : 60, 64). *Parish*, *Illaka* *Synod*, and finally the whole G. E. L. Church of Chotanagpur and Assam, are the other vertical units or divisions after a Lutheran Congregation. Jadi is a congregation in itself and also a Parish Head Quarter. President is the highest authority of the G. E. L. Church. *Synod* also has got a President while *Illaka* and *Parish* have got their respective Chairmen. According to the new constitution of the church framed very recently one more religious unit called as *Anchal* has been introduced in between the Synod and the whole G. E. L. Church.

The converts have religious magazines published from Ranchi and they are subscribed by the villagers which tell them about the religious and other activities of the outside Christian world.

Sacraments of the converts.

Baptization marks the beginning of a convert's life and by which he becomes entitled to get eternal life. The day a child is baptized, it is a matter of great joy for its parents and they invite God parents of the child and a few other guests at their place and entertain them with food and rice beverage.

Confirmation is the next sacrament which marks a convert's

life. It takes place generally after one has passed the childhood and is able to take the whole responsibility of a Christian life on his shoulder. After one is confirmed he is supposed to have transferred the full responsibility of deeds on his shoulder from his God parents. No marriage can take place before one is duly confirmed. At the time of confirmation, the candidate undergoes some religious training. The Lutheran converts also undergo the rites of confirmation but they do not call it a sacrament.

Confession before a priest is another sacrament of the Roman Catholic converts. Before one takes the holy communion, it is necessary to confess one, sin and be sinless. The Lutheran converts also confess, but in a different way. They do prayers and confess to God in their own heart.

Holy communion is the other important sacrament which is regarded by both the denominations of the converts The Catholic converts take only "Flesh" (consecrated bread) of Christ, while the Lutheran converts get both "Flesh" and "blood" (consecrated Juice). It is a means to establish communion with God.

Antmalan is another sacrament of the Catholic converts. It is taken when one is seriously ill and there is no hope of his recovery. Somebody is sent to call a priest from the nearest Mission Bunglow. The Priest comes and makes some prayers by rubbing sacred oil in the forehead of the dying person. Converts believe that the sacrament makes a person free from sin, and that he dies a "good death". It was told further that sometimes the sacrament acts as medicine and the person having got the Antmalan begins to improve and is cured. They opined that it may be due to the fact that after Antmalan the patient becomes free from sin, his body becomes pure and so he is cured. Two converts at Silphari informed the investigator that they had got the Antmalan while they were at the point of death One of them was reported to have got it more than once. By a "good death" the informant meant that the soul of the deceased goes to heaven and there is no chance for him to be sent to palgatory or even if it goes there, it is for a short period only. That is why one informant remarked "if a deceased has got the Antmalan in time, his relatives feel a kind of satisfaction. They are less worried and generally do not wail much than those whose deceased relatives could not get the Antmalan."

Ordination to the priesthood is another sacrament of the Catholic converts. The informant said, "ordination means dedication of one's life in the service of God for the benefit of the Christians at large. It is a call which comes from within. NO parents can stand

in the way of such boys or girls who want to join a society, though sometimes they may test whether their inclination is genuine". One informant narrated in his biography how his daughter when expressed her desire to join a society he discouraged her for a few years with a view to test her. But her request continued and at last finding no other way she wrote a letter to the Bishop of Dinajpur to write a word to her father to allow her to join the society. The Bishop did write to him and ultimately he gave his consent.

Marriage is also considered a sacrament among the Catholic converts. It is instituted in the presence of God and once married, the relation cannot dissolve unless one of them is dead.

There are many prayers of the converts. A convert begins a day with morning prayer and he prays also before and after his meal, or when he begins any work. Evening prayer is important among them. The Catholic converts assemble in a room with all the family members after they have taken their meal or before they are going to sleep. They kneel down and offer evening prayer In families where such joint prayer is somehow not possible, they do it individually. Among the Lutheran converts everybody assemble in the village church to offer their evening prayer and the prayer is led by the catechist or by any Panch of the village.

Prayers, Mass, and RELIGIOUS Procession :

There are numerous prayers according to the different needs of the people viz. prayer during famine, prayer for rain, prayer for the ailing persons, parents' prayer for children, and then prayer to protect one's good faith in religion etc.

Rosary prayer is one of the important prayers of the Catholic Converts. One informant narrated the investigator how rosary played an important role in his life He always kept the rosary with him whether awake or asleep. Even if he goes on tour on a byke, rosary is in his hand and he goes on offering prayers. So long the rosary is with him he does not fear at all. But as soon it is left somewhere, he becomes upset. He cannot have his sleep in night, he becomes afraid of any thing, whether it be a beast, a spirit, or a snake. He thinks that he would not get eternal life if he dies without the rosary in his hand but if it is with him he is any moment glad to face the death.

A Special *Rajyabridhi* prayer is offered weekly by the Lutheran converts along with the evening prayer. The motive of this prayer is to pray for the success of those catechists who are engaged in evengelical work among the non-christians, and also for the change

of faith in the heart of the non-christians. The Lutheran converts also pray for the President of Republic India, its Ministers and higher officials so that they could discharge their duties with grace and justice

Official church services are held on Sunday and during festivals but there are also such Church services, among the Catholic converts which are conducted having some of their personal motives behind it. The convert who wants to get a Church service conducted on his behalf has to bear its necessary expense. Some of the motives behind such church services are as follows: thanks giving to God on some success, on recovery from a serious illness or when one has escaped from some danger, or for the peace of the dying soul etc.

At every parish headquarter a religious procession (Dharmyatra) is organised once a year. At Katkahi which is the Parish Headquarter of Silphari, it is usually held in the month of February, It is attended by large crowds of converts who feel the same joy which they felt while going to their traditional *yatra* This day the "Sacrament" which is lying inside the church and in which God is supposed to be present in flesh and blood in shape of bread, is taken out and carried in the procession by Priests, with great pomp and reverence At Katkahi religious procession which was visited by the investigator this year two altars were made, one in the girl's convent compound and the other near the Priest's bungalow. The Sacrament was carried out moved in procession and placed at both the altars one by one which was followed by certain formal rituals. People would offer prayers while moving in procession and most of them carried decorational flags, religious images and pictures supplied by the Parish Church. Some of the boys and the girls who participated in the procession dressed themselves like different Saints, Mary, Christ and Angels etc.

The Lutheren converts have a different nature of organisations viz: "Cross Sena", "Jyoti Sena", and "Yuwak Sangh". These are religious organisations which meet once a year at some appointed place. Bible class and Sunday school are held and religious and other lectures are delivered by Pastors and other important invitees. Devotional songs are sung and learnt. "Witness" (Sakchchi) is a special programme at these occasions.

Festivals

There are many festivals of the converts viz. Christmas, Easter, Swargarohan, Christ-deh-Parab, Mariam ka Uthan, Mirtak Atmaon ke Parab all having some biblical significance. Christmas and Easter are observed with special pomp and grandeur. Church service,

Holy-communion, dance and song, and also drinks (among the Roman Catholic converts) are the chief creatures of these festivals. Church is decorated with coloured paper, chains and flags.

The Luthern converts are prohibited to drink and hence bread of rice flour and tea are the special preparations during their festivals The converts of Jadi informed me that they do not dance exeept in Christmas. However it varies from one village to another and there is no uniform rule. Mostly, the Lutheran converts perform sitting musical recitation (Baithki Bhajan) The Catholic converts, however, were observed dancing during all the festivals. Only they have been restricted to dance after the sun-set. The use of *Dholki* (a small drum) has gained prominence and the use of *Mandal* is fast decreasing. Among the Lutheren converts the use of *Mandal* and *Nagera* has been abolished. A Bhajan is a song generally containing some devotional or biblical theme having a different tuning in comparison to indigenous Oraon songs At Jadi, the converts said that in their village the boys and girls are not allowed to dance in festivals except during the Christmas. But when the investigator visited another village, it was known that the boys danced also during the Easter, In view of this situation it appears that there is no uniform rule in this connection. The view of the investigator was further confirmed by some informants when they said that such rules and regulations of the village mostly depends upon the Catechist and the Panch of village.

Besides the Christian festivals, the converts also observe some traditional festivals like *Nawakhani* (eating the new crop) *Katni* and *Sohrai*. Nawakhani is observed twice a year once in Sawan (July-August) called *Gondli Nawakhani* and the other in Bhado or Aswin (August-September) called *Gora Nawakhani*. The latter is observed on a large scale The religious aspect of this festival has changed and inspite of offering new crop to the indigenous deity like Sarna Budhia (Roy : 1915, 146) church service is held on the day and the converts take the new crop there to offer it first to God and seek his blessings.

Katni Parab, which is a festival exclusively observed by the Lutheren converts, was also said by some informants to have been adopted on the line traditional of *Kharihani puja* which was performed in the barn after the harvest. (It was performed with a motive that God will compensate all the loss of the crop either due to insect or evil eye). It is held in the month of December after the harvest is over. A special church-service is arranged and the converts bring harvested grain to the church "to thank God because He helped the people in

agricultural works and blessed them, as a result they could reap the crop" Before entering the church, the people collect at a place, form a procession accompanied with music and Bhajan and go around the church Church and houses are specially decorated this day with the ears of newly harvested crop.

The converts shake hand to greet each other. A Catholic convert says *Yisu-ki-Barai* or *Jai Yisu* (may Jesus be praised) while a Lutheran says *Jisu Sahai* (Jesus be helpful to you).

Monthly Meetings.

In the Roman Catholic village, the converts hold monthly sittings which must be attended at least by one member of all families of the village. The Panch, Catechist and the villagers discuss about the social, economic and religious problems of the village and frame certain rules if necessary. The Secretary takes down necessary notes in a register. If a case is filed and tried in these sittings it is called as Panchayat.

On Parish and Bhikhariat level, they have a Catholic Sabha to look after the economic and social welfare of the convert. It also tries to reform the indigenous social custom if it has any adverse effect on the social, economic or religious life of the people. Parish Catholic Sabha holds its monthly meeting at the Parish Head Quarter and is attended by the villagers under its jurisdiction. There is a President and Secretary of the Sabha who is elected annally.

Among the Lutheren converts, every congregation has got *Mandli Panch* (Congregational Panch) and a catechist. They form a body which is called *Pracharak pan*. The function of the Pracharak pan is mainly to look after the religious and social life of the converts. Fines and specially the *Mandli-Bahar* (ex-communication from the congregation) are means of control and punishment. Mandli Bahar is generally inflicted on those converts who do something offending to the Christian faith or violet the ten commandments.

Rite-de-passage.

The old custom of *Mundan* is fastly dying out. A majority still believe in complete shaving of "first hair" but they neither observe any ritual nor arrange any feast on this occasion. Either they go to the market barbers or approach any elderly person who knows the job.

When Catholic children attain the age of eight or nine they are sent to Parish Centre where they undergo a religious training in prayers under some priest or catechist. After undergoing this training only they can take sacrament like confession and holy communion.

The Lutheran converts take the holy communion after they have been confirmed.

Free mixing unlike the non-christians is discouraged as the converts think that it leads to many vices. Five years ago there were two sleeping dormiatories at Silphari. But owing to a few cases of illicit affairs the village Panchayat decided to do away with these dormiatories.

The converts perform church marriage but side by side traditional marriage customs including the *Marwa Benja* are also practised. After the church marriage is over the groom's party goes to the bride's place in a procession. *Uddu-khess or Mangondli, Koñha Pahi, Parichan, Sabha, Kichri-Pahi, Danta-Khutti* are some of these ceremonies performed by the converts. However, the old customs of *Atkha-Kandrika, Gurkhi-Tirkhana, Yisung-sindri, Gundri-Dhukna, Khiri-tengna,* use of vermillion and termeric, *domkanch dance* and a few others as described by Roy (1928 : 152–168) have ceased in practice. Before a convert is married in the Church, he has to fulfil certain Christian preliminaries. The boy and girl both attend marriage school at the parish centre where they are given general instructions as to how to lead a happy married life (only among the catholic converts). They also need to give their consent before the Parish Priest of the girl that they will marry each other. It is called *Bachandat.* Marriage callings take place on three successive Sunday after the *Bachandat,* and one wishing to make any objection concerning the marriage should contact the Parish Priest within this period

A convert's funeral is marked by a series of religious prayers based on Christian traditions. There are different prayers when an ailing person is about to die, when he has died, when the dead body is being carried to the grave yard and when the body is to be placed in the grave As soon a person is dead, the village Catechist is informed and generally he leads all the prayers. The dead bodies of the children who die before getting baptised are not entered in the communal graveyard nor the Catechist joins his funeral. After the dead body has been placed in the grave, everybody assembled at the spot, put handful of earth in the grave with the right hand and not with the left hand as described by Roy (1928 : 174). Though a few cases of death feasts were found at Silphari, in general the converts condemn this traditional practice. No *bijarpo* or *Baipi* paddy is collected by the sympathisers nor paddy and cotton are dropped throughout the way to funeral. Old custom of placing coins in the mouth of deceased or utensils inside the grave with the dead.

body or smearing the body with termeric have almost ceased. Now, the converts put a cross and rosary with the dead body in the grave with which the deceased used to pray in his life time. These are religious symbols and some of the converts opened that they helped the soul even after death.

Economy.

Agriculture forms the main occupation as ever but in some cases some of the converts have taken tailoring as their main profession There are four tailors at Silphari and two of them got their training in some Mission tailoring centre. Besides tailoring, training in carpentary and weaving are also given in such Mission centres.

Missionary schools have also helped a lot towards the education of the people. There are two high schools at Champur (nearly a mile from Silphari), one belonging to the Roman Catholic Mission and another to the Lutheran Church. After completing his study, a convert generally tries to get into some job. It has caused migration of the converts from their villages to distant towns and cities like Ranchi, Raigarh, Ambikapur and Delhi etc.

The converts have their grainaries and banks which help them during needs. They have got societies for supplying labour which operate on mutual basis and work only on nominal charge. They solve some of their major agricultural and other economic problems. Thaching of roof and putting of tiles, carrying of wood or stone slabs for the purpose of house constructions, making barrage, reclaiming a waste land are some of the main economic undertaking of these Societies.

Working of Cultural processes among the Converts

Owing to the adoption of christian faith by the Oraon, it is evident from the above ethnographic data that they are fast changing. The nature of change is manifold. If we analyse the date carefully we would note processes of readjustment, compromise, persistence and conflict, operating among the Oraon christian communities. Reserving their definition for the present, I will endeavour to refer to these processes. Some old informants narrated that in the beginning when Oraon were converted, there was much conflict between the pagan faith of the indigenous Oraon and the new Christian faith. Their religion was changed but to a great extent their belief in witchcraft, propitiation of evil spirit, consulation of witch doctors, dancing during the festivals like *Karama* and *Sarhul* persisted[2].

A majority of the converts could not completely give up the faith in their clan spirit or the powerful deities of the village. They

had constant fear of these deities and they often indulged in their worship secretly. It took some time to become fully convinced of the new faith and to give up the old rituals. Now when Christianity is six to seven decades old in the area, with the constant interaction of the indigenous culture with Christianity, the situation has greatly improved. The processes of readjustment and reorganisation in the Oraon culture is prominently evident. However, cases of persistence of indigenous custom can be still found which at times lead to conflicts and create certain problems.

As mentioned earlier, the non-christian Oraon recognise Dharmes as the supreme divinity who is the creator of universe. With the change in religion, the old belief in spirits have greatly fallen into disuse but the converted Oraon have found some resemblance between the *Dharmes* and the father God of the Christians, who is also the creator of heaven and earth Still the converts use the word Dharmes for the God of their new faith. The other spirits and deities of the Oraon have come to be regarded as the manifestations of *Satan*. Satan has great powers and the converts think that it always tries to seduce a convert by testing him in several ways Roy also refers about the readjustment of old and new religious faith..."the christian dualistic doctrine of the spirit of good and the spirit of evil-God and the good angels, on the one hand, and the Devil and his evil hosts on the other,—fitted in with the Oraon conception of Dharmes, the spirit of Good, on the one hand, and the malignant spirits and the 'evil eye', and 'evil mouth' on the other." (Roy : 1928 : 338).

Marriage among the Oraon, as also in other communities forms an important event in an individval's life. It is an occasion, which besides binding two persons into marital union fulfils social obligations as well. A non-christian Oraon marriage is marked with series of elaborate rites and ceremonies having also propitiation of deities amidst some of those rites. Christianity has brought a great transformation in the Oraon marriage customs. Old sets of customs have no use so far as the christian faith is concerned. Marriage conducted in the Church by a religious priest is all that matters for a Christian Oraon but the Church marriage as such leaves no room for the fulfilment of the social obligations of the Oraon which is coming through generations. And for that reason, as mentioned earlier, the converts still arrange marriage procession and perform some of the traditional rites before going and then after returning from the "Church marriage".

The converts say that it gives them an opportunity to invite

their friends and relatives to entertain them with feast and drink and rejoice together. In this context they added further that two types of customs existed in the Oraon Society—social and religious. Religious customs have been given up while the social customs are still preserved. A convert's marriage, thus, is another case of compromise between the indigenous and christian observances.

Not only human being but even inanimate objects like well too are 'married'. It was told that after a well is dug out and ready for use it must be married The custom of *Indra Benja* (well marriage) still persists with some modifications Originally it was believed that if a well is used before its marriage "maggots will breed in the...water of the well..." (Roy 1928 : 90) But now the converts give a different interpretation. They say that a well construction involves so much of troubles and the "marriage" just gives them an opportunity to drink and enjoy with their friends and relatives after the completion of such a strainous job. Some other converts said that in the marriage of a well they offer their prayer to God and thank him as the construction of the well is successfully completed.

Dance constitutes an other important feature of the non-christian Oraon culture. Their dance continues till late in the night and, they also dance in pairs of boy and girl. These things have now been prohibited on moral grounds as the converts think that they give support to corruption. In view of this fact the converts are not allowed to dance at *Akhra* after the sun set or in pairs. This adjustment between the indigenous and the christian values of life also refers to the process of compromise.

After conversion. indigenous festivals, have lost their significance. *Nawakhani*, *Sohrai* and *Katni*, however, persist and have been readjusted in the new set up of the converts society. In Nawakhani the indigenus Oraon used to offer the new corn of *Gonra* and Gondli to Saran Budhia but now the offering of these corn are made to God during the church service. Similarly a special church service is held on *Katni* festival day and the villagers offer newly harvested corn before God in the church. During *Sohrai* the Catholic converts smear oil on the horns and hoofs of cattle, and children decorate them with flowers. Two such converts said that they bring holy water from the Parish church and sprinkle it on the cattle to receive blessings on them. So again we find a case of compromise in the indigenous festivals.

Inspite of readjustment and compromise in certain aspects, we note that the pagan values and faith are in conflict with the christian faith. Old values are so deep-rooted in the minds of the Oraon

and it persists to such an extent that it has led to conflicts and certain problems crop up in the society. In some cases persistence itself has become a problem as it is contradictory to the new religious faith and impede the full realisation of Christian way of life.

Bible does not prohibit the use of liquor though it was said, its use is restricted to a moderate quantity. If it is taken in excess it may lead to several vices including jealousy, quarrel, illicit sexual relation, theft etc. The converts say that drinking also makes a Christian convert fall in his religion The local bodies interested in the reformation of the converts such as Catholic Sabha or even village Panchayat have realised it and are trying their best to eliminate it by making an appeal to the converts to restrict the quantity of the drinking of rice beverage even on the occasions of marriage and festivals. However, inspite of several attempts, the habit is so deep-rooted that on the average, the people are not in a position to give up the habit of drinking. Cases have been recorded when the converts got into trouble due to excessive drinks.

Drink presents a problem because some converts are so much addicted to it that they can not check this temptation. But it also becomes a problem for those converts who are willing to give up the habits or like to make a moderate use of it. One such informant said "I cannot go and sit among our fellow converts who are great addicts of drink and form a major bulk in the village If I go there, our drunkard friends will persuade me to take more and more leaf-cups of beverage and sometimes even compel us to do so and they will not be satisfied unless we also become drunk like them. That is why I try to avoid such a company". The other convert said "...... this is the reason why I generally avoid the marriage ceremonies of my friends, or even if I go there it is for a short time only. The third convert told the investigator on the day of Sohrai festival ".. I know, the people are heavily drunk today.........In the morning an old women caught me and began to lead me to her house for drink. She was practically dragging me to her house. It was with great difficulty that I could escape. For the whole day I remained confined in my house with a fear that again somebody would come to presuade me for a drink".

I met another convert who has made his principle not to drink at other's house as it leads to excess. He never joins the company of the villagers during the festivals or on such other occasions when rice-bear is to be served. It has affected his sociability as some of the villagers observed that "he is a selfish person as he does not mix with the people"

Witchcraft is another example of cultural persistence which has created certain problems. It is considered irreligious and is condemned by Christianity. However the investigator met some Lutheran converts who accepted the existence of witches in the village and said that they were troubled by them. Some converts who believed in witchcraft said "Spirits are the different forms of Satan. It always tests the good faith of converts. So long one has firm faith in God, no spirit can harm him but as soon his faith is weak he becomes a victim of Satan". They further remarked "Just as we Indians became independent after getting our freedom similarly after the conversion the witches have become free now, there is no body to trouble them Christianity does not recognise witchcraft and maintains that it is a superstition. Owing to this if any one is troubled by a witch he cannot take any action against her. If he brings a complaint in the panchayat he will be considered superstitious and he will be punished".

A convert narrated an incidence of his young age when within a very short period his father, grand father and sisters all died. It aroused suspicion in his mind and he made a complaint in the Panchayat against a woman who was supposed to be a witch. But inspite of taking any action against that woman, the Panchayat fined him and asked him not to believe in superstition any more. The matter was thus ended but the convert still showed his full faith that the deceased had become the victims of witchcraft.

The investigator was told about an incident at Jadi when some cattle of a convert died within a few months. The matter was examined by some *vaid* and was detected to be a case of witchcraft. The convert suspected the witch concerned and he mobilised many fellow supporters. The matter went to such an extent that the people were going to assault the suspected woman, but the village catechist and some other enlightened converts came at her rescue and saved her. The son of the woman complained the matter to the police but later on the matter was reconciled by the Panchayat and Ilaka authority.

The persistence of pre-marital and extra-marrital relations also has created social and religious problems among the converts. It is against the ten commandments. Inspite of the efforts of Christianity, some such incidences take place. If there is a case of illicit relation or illegal child the village Panchayat sees that it leads to marriage. The pair confesses their sin, and among the Catholic converts a special mass is arranged for the atonement of their sin. Among the Lutherans, the procedure is different. Such boys and girls are first ex-communicated from the congregation, and then readmitted after

they fulfil necessary conditions. But in case when illict connection could not lead to marriage, such girls who had been once ex-communicated from the congregation, become low in the social status and sometimes it is difficult to get a suitable match for them.

According to christianity a marriage tie never disolves till any of the couple is alive Sometimes it leads to a great problem. At Silphari one convert who is nearly fifty-five in age told me that his wife fled away with some man just a month after his marriage. Twice he approached the Parish Priest for seeking permission for the second marriage but his request was rejected on the ground that his wife was still alive in Bhutan. It is mainly a religious problem but it has got its economic aspects too Such ill-fated converts cannot again make a family of their own or cannot add any economic hand to their household and moreover they have to depend on their relatives throughout their life.

Conclusion :

So far we have examined the processes of readjustment, compromise, persistence, and conflict. While we speak of a cultural process, it is understood that it refers to something which is dynamic in nature. Logically then, the processes which have been taken into consideration here are also changing in nature and extent on the time level. Today what we put into the category of readjustment might have passed through a phase of conflict and similarly, where we find conflict between the indigenous and christian traditions, that may result in the phase of compromise or readjustment in the time to come.

Culture change is a very broad topic which involves a number of cultural processes. The processes described in this paper can not be said to cover every sort of Christian impact operating among the Oraon. It is just a preliminary attempt to suggest some of the cultural process which may be further refind, illustrated and documented.

NOTES

1. Dr. L. P. Vidyarthi, my supervisor, has given his valuable time in reading and correcting the paper. While the opinion expressed in the paper is entirely mine, I have got great help from him in presenting the date in a meaningful form. I have great pleasure in ackowledging the financial assistance of the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, New York which awarded me predoctoral fellowship for undertaking this research assignment.

2. The investigator was informed by a few informants of Bendora (a village five miles from Chainpur) which has Christian as well as non-christian Oraon over there, that just after a few years of conversion to christianity some of the families were reconverted to the traditional Oraon fold because they did not stop rejoicing and dancing during the *Karma* and *Sarhul* festivals. The

Catholic Missionaries did not approve it, the people were finedand not allowed to do Church marriage till they paid the fine.

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CHANGES IN THE CYCLE OF FESTIVALS IN A BHUMIJ VILLAGE

Surajit Sinha

The Bhumij are, according to leading ethnographers of Chotanagpur area like Dalton, Risley and Roy, a Hinduised off-shoot of the Munda of Ranchi plateau. Their major habitat to-day is the southern portion of Manbhum district and Dhalbhum sub-division of Singbhum district.

During 1950–53 and, again, during 1956–57, the writer was engaged in studying the processes of culture change among the Bhumij mainly on the basis of intensive study of changes in a single village, namely Madhupur, in Chandil Police Station of South Manbhum.

The present essay[1] deals with one aspect of Bhumij Culture, namely, the annual cycle of festivals.

Before proceeding directly with the topic under discussion, it will be worthwhile to state briefly the major changes in social organisation that we find among the Hinduised Bhumij of South Manbhum as compared with the tribal Munda of Ranchi. The changes have been mainly in the following directions : extensions and diversification of territorial ties, formation of feudalized states and related social classes, multi ethnic (or multi-caste) interactions in social life and finally, the Bhumij acceepting a more or less specific status in the regional heirarchy of Hindu castes.

Keeping the above background of structural changes in mind we shall present our data on the cycle of festivals. It should be noted, however, that we are not aiming at giving a full description of each of the festivals in a year. We shall rather select a few significant ones and describe them schematically mainly with a view to delineating the processes of transformation, both in terms of social organisation and in terms of contents of cultural tradition.

A generalised picture of the pattern of festival cycles common to the tribes closely related to the Bhumij, such as the Munda and the Ho will be presented initially and then the contemporary scene will be examined in more detail.

The Aboriginal Pattern :

The festivals of the Munda or the Ho, both of whom are settled agriculturists, using the plough for centuries past, are keyed mainly to the cycle of agricultural activities. The welfare of crops and live-stock and avoidance of sickness in men are the central themes in most of them. Thus the following festivals directly refer to supernatural aid in agricultural activities : the ceremony of first sowing (Baba Muth Parab of the Ho) ; the ceremonies associated with transplantation of paddy seedlings and their growth (Damurai and Hero Parab among the Ho and Batuli or Kadleta among the Munda) ; the ceremony of eating the first harvested rice (Jomnowa among the Ho and the Munda) ; the ceremony on the threshing floor (Kolom among the Ho and the Munda) and thanksgiving ceremony (Mage Parab among the Ho and the Munda).

Besides the above mentioned agricultural ceremonies, there are others related to hunting and collecting activities, such as Baha Parab festival among the Ho and the Munda, celebrating the first blooming of *sal* flowers and the Phagu Sendra or Spring Hunting Ceremony among the Munda. The welfare of the cattle and buffaloes is an important theme in Mage Parab among the Munda and the Ho, and in the Bandhna or Sohorai festival of the Santal.

The more important and vigorous festivals take place at the end of agricultural operations when granaries are relatively full and there is not much work to be done. The major festivals are marked by the following general characteristics. First of all, the selection of the date of a festival is done by the village priest, in consultation with the village elders. The date, except for the Phagu Sendra among the Munda which takes place on the full-moon in the month of Phalgun (March-April), is not astronomically fixed in terms of lunar calender, as is the case with the majority of the Hindu Great Traditional Festivals. After the selection of the date the village messenger shouts out the decision walking through the lanes of the village, and every household gets busy cleaning the hosehold court-yard, plastering and painting the mud walls and preparing rice-beer both for offering to the gods and goddesses and also for household consumption.

Each festival involves some ritualistic activities, the central place of whose occurrence is usually the sacred grove or *jahera*. The village priest Deuri or Pahan, who formerly was also the headman,

performs the rituals, assisted by hereditary assistants

Prayers are invariably simple and worded as in day to day conversations, and offerings are made to all the multitude of usually benevolent gods and godesses : the Supreme Being or Sun god, Sing Bonga, the presiding deity of the clan, Marang Bonga, the presiding deity of the villages residing in the sacred grove, Jaher Bura and his wife Jaher Buri, the ancestral spirits, Ora Bongas and numerous hills-spirits referable to the hills surrounding a village.

Offerings and sacrifices include rice, vermillion, chicken and rice-beer ; while, it is possible, that they formerly also sacrificed pigs and cattle.

The rituals are accompanied by group dances of women, or by men and women together, while the men play on musical instruments such as flutes, country-made violins and drums The more important festivals, such as Mage or Baha invariably prescribe sexual indulgence

The festivals are accompanied by feasting and sumptuous drinking of rice-beer at home The festivals admit, beside the members of the tribe, only a few outsider castes for participation. These outsiders may be the village blacksmiths, weavers, basketeers or sweepers.

On the whole, we may say that these festivals are communally sponsored and not keyed to the prestige of an individual , the main purpose is communal welfare; there is no reference to a precise sacred lunar calender ; the prayers are simple, unsystematised and not sufficiently specialised in terms of different festivals ; the villagers, as a whole, are aware of the supernatural connotation of the festival ; there is little specialised performance and differentiation between the audience and the performers ; there is no reference to a complex and elaborate sacred lore or myth ;[2] and villagers meet on a plane of equality in social participation.

The Contemporary Pattern

The following table lists the festivals in which the Bhumij villagers of Madhupur participate today. These include many that are the result of contact with Bengali Hinduism and the places of whose occurence are often away from the village of Madhupur :

Months (in Bengali)	Fortnight and day	Name of the Festival.	Central Theme	Place of Occurrence	Whether Aboriginal or Hindu
Baisakh	No fixed sacred date	Chait Parab	Worshipping Shiva and performance of the penance of hook-swinging.	Within the village	Hindu
	No fixed sacred date	Sarhul Parab	The festival of offering the first blossoms of *Sal* flowers to the village tutelary gods	Within the village	Aboriginal
	1.15	Desh Shikar	The annual communal hunting	Dalma hills (five miles south)	Aboriginal
Jaishtha (May-June)	1:13	Rohin Parab	The ceremony of the first of sowing of paddy seeds	Within the village	Hinduised Aboriginal
Asarha (June July)	1:2	Ratha Jatra	Pulling the chariot of Lord Juggernath	Balarampur (eight miles east)	Hindu
	2 10	Jantal, Hairo or Asarhi Puja	The ceremony prior to the first transplantation of paddy seedlings	Within the village	Aboriginal
	2:10	Dalma Puja	Worship of the presiding deity of Dalma Hills for fertility in crops and, specially, for fertility in women	Dalma hills (five miles south)	Aboriginal
Sravana (June-Aug)	not fixed	Manasa Puja	Worship of the presiding goddess of serpents	Neighbouring villages within one mile of Madhupur	Hindu
Bhadra (Aug-Sep)	not fixed	Manasa Puja	Worship of the presiding goddess of serpents	Neighbouring villages within one mile of Madhupur	Hindu

Months (in Bengali)	Fortnight and day	Name of the Festival.	Central Theme	Place of Occurrence	Whether Aboriginal or Hindu
Bhadra (Aug-Sept.)	1:11	Karam Parab	Worship of the presiding deity of the *karam* tree	The neighbouring villages	Aboriginal (?)
	1:12	Ind Parab	Worship of the god Indra for the welfare of the lineage of the Chief of Barabhum and for the subjects of the estate	Barabazar (twelve miles east)	Hindu
	2:8	Jitua Parab	Worship of god Jimutbahan	Bamni (two miles southwest)	Hindu
	2:15	Chhata Parab	Celebration of raising the umbrella for the welfare of the Chief's lineage	Gobarghusi (fourteen miles to the southeast), Chakultor (twenty miles northeast)	Hindu (?)
Aswin (Sept-Oct)	2:7-10	Durga Puja	Worship of the Sanskritic goddess Durga	Bamni (two miles Southwest)	Hindu
Kartic (Oct-Nov)	2:15	Bandhna Parab, Kalipuja	Worship of the presiding deity of cattle and also the worship of the Hindu goddess Kali	Within the village	Bandhna appears to be an Aboriginal festival, while Kalipuja is borrowed from the Hindu immigrants

Months (in Bengali)	Fortnight and day	Name of the Festival	Central Theme	Place of Occurrence	Whether Aboriginal or Hindu
Agrhayan (Nov-Dec)	—	—	—	—	—
Paus (Dec-Jan)	2:15	Tusu Parab and Makar Sankranti	Worship of the goddess Tusu and taking sacred bath	Village and Chhatapukur (twelve miles northwest) Satighata (eighteen miles northwest)	Hindu (?)
	2:15	Delde-Buru Parab	Worship of the presiding deity of the hill named Rupsang Dungri	Rupsang (twelve miles southeast)	Aboriginal
Magh (Jan-Feb)	No fixed date	Magh Puja, Ban Bhojan Baram Baita	Worship of the village tutelary gods and driving away the evils from the village	Within the village	Aboriginal
	1 5	Saraswati Puja	Worship of goddess Saraswati	Purnapani (one mile northeast)	Hindu
Phalgun	—	—	—	—	—
Chaitra	2:15	Chaitra Sankranti	Worship of Hindu god Shiva	Dalma Hills (five miles south)	Hindu

Before analyzing the changes, let us describe briefly three kinds of festivals in which the Bhumij of Madhupur participate: Sarhul, the most important among the aborigival festivals, which takes place at Madhupur attenuated, factioned, competed by parallel Hinduised festivals and yet holding ground in the minds of the people, Ind Parab at Barabazar sponsored by the lineage of the former feudal Super-Chief of Pargannah Barabhum, now a revenue paying Zamindar, involving the participation of 336 or more villages and Chait Parab at Madhupur where the villagers observe a festival more specialised, expensive, and larger in territorial range of participation than anything they knew before in aboriginal times.

Sarhul Festival at Madhupur

At Madhupur, Sarhul festival usually takes place on a fixed date, twenty sixth of Baisakh (towards the end of May), that is two days after the completion of the gorgeous Chait Parab festival in the village. For three or four generations past, two territorial segments of the village, also forming two major factional blocks, namely those of the hamlets Bhengat, Bandhtani and Rangkar on the one hand, and that of Madhupur and Kenddih on the other, have been observing the festival separately in distinct sacred groves or *Jaheras.*

As the village was infested with small pox in the year that we stayed among them (1358 B. S., 1951), the occurence of the festival was postponed from the scheduled date. As it is customary not to carry cooked tiffin for the workers in the field until *Sarhul Parab* is performed, the villagers could not postpone the performance of the festival too long The village council finally met and selected the date of the festival as the tenth of Jaistha (middle of June). It may be noted here that such shifting of the sacred date for a festival is rarely allowed in traditional Hindu festivals.

In the evening of the ninth day of Jaistha the village priest or Laya Baneswar Singh, accompanied by his ritual assistant or Kurum Laya, Hira Singh, after taking a ceremonial bath in the village tank, went to the village headman's house to take *gulanch* flowers, betel nuts, kajal, ghee, honey, earthen lamp, rice-powder, *methi*, turmeric paste, etc. They carried the above articles to the village tank and ceremonially invited the village tutelary gods to participate in the festival where the villagers would offer them gifts.

The Laya and his assistant slept in the house of the former on the bare floor expecting to dream some significant dreams forecasting the future of the villagers. Very early in the morning, at about 3 A. M., Hira Singh got up to bring ceremonially pure water, *shem*

jal, from the village tank. He kept the filled in earthen picther, covered at the top by a *sal* leaf cup, in the village sacred grove.

At about twelve noon, the following day, the Laya and his assistant proceeded to the sacred grove accompanied by an elderly widow who carried the various articles of worship from the headman's house A bunch of children stoned at the *sal* trees in the grove and gathered flowers for the worship.

Very soon the Laya started his worship, *puja*, in front of the vertical stone slab known as *jaherthan*, the seat of the presiding deity of the village at the base of a *sal* tree. The Laya first of all watched whether the *shem jal* brought on the previous night remained full to the brim in the pitcher. This year the level was found to be slightly lower than the brim, which indicated a dearth of rain in the coming year

The Laya marked dots on the ground in front of the Jaherthan slab with vermillon, sun-dried rice powder, *methi kajal*, etc., in the names of the following deities. Starting with Ganesha, he proceeded to mention other gods like Dharam, Jaher Bura, Jaher Buri, Dessauli, Shiva, Kali, Durga, Pancha Kali, Mahamahi, Bhangat Kudra. Kamin Buri, Pancha Debata, sixty four Jugins, etc.

It may be noted that out of the seventeen gods mentioned, eight represent gods of the Hindu Great Tradition (Ganesha, Shiva, Kali, Durga, Manasa, Rakhsha Kali, Pancha Kali, Pancha Debta), six represent distinctly aboriginal gods (Garam, Jaher Bara, Jaher Buri, Dessauli, Bhangat Kudra, Kamin Buri) and three represent lower caste, peasant Hindu tradition (?) of the region (Dharam, Mahamahi, Jugin).

To each of the above deities the following simple prayer was offerred in vernacular. "Oh father (or mother) today, we all people of the village offer you worship. The village is in the grip of small-pox. Save us from this and other dangers I am offering you the articles that have been given to me by the villagers."

One gets the impression that the above gods were being treated as qualitatively equivalent and not as sufficiently specialised in attributes or functions. Flowers and sweets were offerred at the end of the prayers. After this a he-goat was sacrificed. The goat had first of all to eat some paddy grains put before it, of its own accord. For a long time the goat refused to eat and the assembled people got worried as this indicated some evil omen. They alternately entreated and chastized the tutelary gods so as not to stand in the way of the goat's eating grains. The villagers' wholesome concern about the correct performance of the ritual appeared quite convincing to the

writer. At last the goat did eat and its head was chopped off in one blow of an axe.

The Laya had then to recount the two dreams that had dreamt on the previous night and they were interpreted by the assembly as indicating trouble to the village in the future and that the disease of smallpox came to Madhupur from the villages of Bareda and Makula.

The people then started singing traditional Sarhul songs, sitting with folded hands around the *than* or the sacred slab, expecting that some of them would get possessed and declare the future of the rains and crops for the year. The stock of songs, however, appeared to be quite limited. The songs continued for about an hour, but no one got possessed. This made the people somewhat uneasy. Some among the assembly were making cynical remarks about the power of the village tutelary gods. After two hours' trial, the enterprise was given up.

The assembled people, all men, then took part in the *kahuri* (scrambled meat and rice) cooked by the children and young men. There was no dancing or drinking or even continuation of singing The crowd dispersed taking one or two *sal* flowers from the Laya for sticking to thatched roofs of their houses.

This year the Laya did not go from house to house to offer *sal* flowers and to get his feet washed by the women, as it was already too late in the evening.

The lack of a sufficient stock of songs, the fact that no one got possessed, and the somewhat careless way in which the custom of the Laya's visiting the various Bhumij families was eliminated, give us the impression that the festival is definitely losing its ground among the people. Even fifteen years ago the festival used to be enlivened with group dancing by women while men played on drums and flutes and sang songs, for the whole night. There was plenty of drinking of rice-beer and *mahua* wine. The offerings to the gods included rice-beer, *mahua* wine, and chicken.

The Bhumij Khastriya caste mobility movements in recent years have swept away the obviously low Hindu caste-like traits such as group dancing by women, offering chicken and wine as sacrifices, etc., from this once most important traditional festival of the Bhumij.

In contrast to Chait Parab festival, which had terminated only two days previously, with its gorgeous, open and proud display of masked dancing, Sarhul festival was marked by its efforts to get the bare rituals done relatively unobserved, mainly under the cover of darkness. Although the festival still holds considerable ground in

the minds of the Bhumij, in terms of its spiritual efficacy, it has come to attain a low prestige connotation in the Bhumijs' view of the self in terms of their consciousness of the opinions of the Hindu outer world In many villages in the neighbourhood of Madhupur, we have come across Bhumijes even denying that they observe the Sarhul festival

Knowing some of the villagers of Madhupur fairly intimately, our general impression is that the Bhumij of this village still have considerable sentimental loyalty to the sacred grove and the performance of the Parab which are believed to had protected their ancestors from catastrophies. Again and again we have come across informants declaring in their relaxed moments—"who knows probably our negligence in the performance of the Sarhul Parab has brought us to our present unfortunate situation of repeated failure of crops and rain. There was always plentiful rain in our forefathers' times." The Bhumij feel uneasy and guilty about being disloyal to their beneficial tutelary gods.

Ind Parab at Barabazar.

Let us now accompany some of the Bhumij villagers of Madhupur to a *much larger festival Ind Parab (or Indra Puja)*, at Barabazar, the headquarter town of the former Sovereign Chief or Raja of Pargannah Barabhum, lying about twelve miles to the east of Madhupur. The said festival which takes place on the twelfth lunar day in the month of Bhadra (August-September), is sponsored by the Raja (now Zamindar) of Barabhum.[3] Here we are in company of people from nearly all of this 336 or more villages included in the estate of Barabhum and also some from places beyond its jurisdiction like Parganas Patkum, Manbhum and Shikarbhum.

Visitors to this festival belong to over thirty distinct ethnic groups, castes and tribes. It may be mentioned that in 1950 and again in 1957 when we visited the festival, majority of the visitors to the festival were found to belong to the Mahto caste and the Santal came next in number. The Bhumij formed only the third most numerous group among the visitors.

At about 2 P M. when we reached Barabazar with nine other Bhumij men from Madhupur in the September of 1950 two umbrellas of bamboo frame to be ceremoniously raised on the occasion of Ind Parab, were being decorated in cloth in front of the brick-built family temple of the Raja. We then went to the festive ground where two big wooden posts, known as *Ind Dang*, had been kept ready to be raised up as soon as the two decorated umbrellas would arrive there to be fitted at the tops of the *Ind Dang* posts.

About a hundered yards away from the posts, a fair gathered where artisans, professional traders and others sat with their temporary stalls. The main difference of this fair from the regular weekly markets in this regions was in the relative abundance of sweets and tea stalls and of various luxury items. In September of 1957, when we attended festival once more, the temporary stalls included the following types, and in following numbers : betel, *biri* and matches—43, sweets—16, glass bangles—9, nickel rings, bangles, tasilsman, hair-pins etc.—5, tea stalls—3, wooden combs—2, stationery shops—2, fishing hooks—2, *chanachur* or fried grams—2, bamboo flute—1, sacred pictures—1, fan of peacock-feather—1, plastic toys—1, baloon—1, paper flowers—1, tape for hair—2, silk threads etc —1, lottery on looking glass, hand-kerchief and miscellaneous items—1, iron frame for *dhamsha* drums—1, local biscuits—1, *dugdugi* toy—1. Besides these, a buffaloe was also brought to the festive ground for sale.

The sellers belonged to twenty three casts among whom the Moira formed the most numerous group The Boishtom and the Mohamedan came next in number. It is rather stricking that there was not a single Bhumij among the above sellers. Unlike the weekly market there were no sale of groceries and mill-made cloths in the fair. Numerous betting stalls which formed an essential element of the festival during our first visit in 1950 were no longer to be found in 1957. This was probably due to more severe police vigilance against this illegal trade.

At about 3 P. M. the crowd at the festival ground swelled to a probable number of over 10,000 persons. In many cases young men were found to come in groups with sticks and battle axes in hand which they raised up simultaneously in great vigour with the beating of drums, *madal* while singing filthy *Bahadurlya Danr Saila* songs. In some cases young men were dressed as females while dancing typical linear group dances of *Danr Nach* type.

At about 4 P. M., two officers of the Zamindar of Barabhum, both belonging to the Rajput Chatri Caste, came to initiate the raising of the two umbrellas. Twelve Doms preceeded them with the beating of drums. As the Raja was away from the capital town, his crown and sword were carried as his emblem by the family priest Jagannath Tripathi, an Utkal Sreni Brahman.

Formerly this was the occasion for a very pompous and regal procession from the palace to the festive ground. The Raja used to be carried on a decorated planquin carried by eight persons. He was followed by his close agnates, Hikim shaheb, Jubaraj etc. on elephant

back. Following the above marched the subordinate fedual chiefs, Taraf Sardars, in their best dress, on horse-back with unsheathed sword. The latter in their turn were followed by village-level chiefs or Ghatwals and their military assistants Tanbedars.

After the two umbrellas were tied to the two *Ind Dang* posts (the bigger one representing the presiding deity of the Raj family, Sri Brindabanchand and the other representing the royal lineage itself) two Brahman Priests, both belonging to Utkal Sreni began offering *Puja* at the base of the two *Ind Dang* posts. Prayers were being offered for the welfare of the royal lineage and for the subjects to Devaraj Indra. The above rituals included the following elements in succession : Swastibachan Sankalpa, Puja of Panchadevata (Ganesh, Surya, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga), Shaktipuja, Indrapuja (Karannayas, Varnannyas, Matrikannyas, Bhutasuddhi, Pranayam, Dhyan and Shodoshapachar Puja of Indra, Brahma-Vishnu-Maheswar Puja, Ananta Nag Puja, Padma Nagini Puja, Ashta Nagini Puja, Astra Puja and Airabat Puja, Pratipadadi Panchadash Tithi Puja, Ashwinnyadih Swaptavingshati Nakshatradi Puja, Abartadi Chatushtay Mesha Puja, Rabyadi Soptabashur Puja, Basantadi Shastha Ritu Puja, Meshadih Dwadash Rashi Puja. These are followed by *Japa* (meditation) *Homa* (offering of *ghee* on sacrificial fire along with incantations) and finally *Bali* or sacrifice of goats. Two he-goats were sacrificed, each with a single blow of a sword and the blood and the heads were offered as sacrifice at the base of the two *Ind Dang* posts.

After these, at the order of the Rajput Chhatri Officials of the Raja, the two *Ind Dang* posts were raised up to a vertical position, being pulled by thick ropes made of wild grass known locally as *babui*. As the posts were thus being raised, the assembled crowd cheered up in great excitement and raised their sticks. Those among the female visitors who had observed Karam festival at home, brought a handful of *Jawa* seedlings of various locally grown crops which they threw towards the rising *Ind Dang* posts

If the Raja were present on the occasion he would then embrace the two *Ind Dang* posts. This would be followed by offering of prayers to Indra and then the *Abhishekh* ceremony or formal crowning of the Raja would take place at the base of one of the *Ind Dang* Posts. The queen is represented on this occasion by a betel nut. Then the Raja would encircle both the posts anti-clockwise three times and this would end the ritual aspect of the festival and the Raja would return to his palace in Royal procession.

After the raising of the *Ind Dang* posts, the focus of the visitors shifted to the fair ground. Whereas in 1950 we still found group dancing by Santal women folk in the above place, in 1957 the Santals were found to had given up the custom as being shameful. The major crowd dispersed at about dusk. It may be mentioned in passing that the nine Bhumij villagers of Madhupur who accompanied the writer to the festival went there just for the sake of fun and not out of a conscious feeling of getting some supernatural merit or blessing.

Every year, two new *Ind Dang* posts have to be prepared for this festival. These *sal* posts are brought from specially reserved patches of jungle in the villages of Punrihasa and Hanspur. On the day of Gomua Purnima (that is the day of full moon in the month of Sravana) a person belonging to Lohar Majhi cast of Barabazar town went to the above forests and specially marked with his axe two *sal* trees for making *Ind Dang* posts for the year 1950. On the following date of new moon, the said Lohar Majhi, accompanied by a few other members of his own caste went to the above mentioned forests and felled the two trees. People of village Rupapaita carried one of the posts to the festive ground while the other one was carried by the villagers of Parsa and Lakhanpur. For the above jobs the said villagers got the traditional fee of Rs. 2/- per village from the Raja.

Giri Bagal (caste : Gop) is hereditarily entrusted with scaling the posts with an adze and bringing them to shape.

The villagers of Puijanga twisted babui grass into ropes and got Rs. 2/8/– as their fee. The villagers of Bamnidih and Gobindpur were entrusted with planting the wooden posts at the festive ground for which they each got the traditional fee of Rs. 2/- per village.

Thus the ceremony, besides involving general participation of people from 336 or more villagers and members of over 30 distinct castes, entails specialized participation of seven villages and members of five castes, the Chhatri, Brahman, Lohar-Majhi, Gop and Dom.

The central organisation of the festival is in the hands of the Zamindar (or Raja), his secular officers and priests all of whom belong to the higher castes and the upper economic class. The main rituals of the festival are connected to the Great Tradition of India and to the Great Sanskritic Gods who are propitiated with incantations in Sanskrit.

However, this Great Traditional ritual under the patronage of the Zamindar is vitally linked with the "lesser" rituals of the village girls who throw seedlings gathered from sacred *Jawa dali*

baskets offered to a regional god named Karam Deota. The latter deity is worshipped for the welfare of crops and the welfare of brothers. It should also be mentioned that villagers all over Parganah Barabhum make it a point to plant a branch of *sal* tree in their paddy fields on this particular date—with the belief that this would avert diseases in crops.

Chait Parab : Elaborations at Home

Between the last day of the month of Chaitra (March-April) and the end of Jaishtha (May-June) occurs one of the most gorgeous festivals of the area, which takes place on different dates at various villages in the neighborhood of Madhupur. Village Madhupur has been observing the festival for the last seventy five years when they first placed the stone Shiva Linga, the phallic symbol of Shiva, under the big banyan tree of the village, now known as Shivasthan, the seat of Shiva.

The central theme of Chait Parab is the worship of Shiva. The festival is officiated by a "low class" Brahman priest assisted by a Bhumij who is designated as Pat Bhogta or Shiva Laya. In Madhupur, Hira Singh, who is the assistant of the Bhumij village priest Laya, is also the Pat Bhogta or assistant of the Brahmin priest of Shiva. A number of males observe fasting on this occasion, put on sacred threads temporarily and each hold a cane stick in hand. The people observing such ritual penance are known as *bhogta* or devotee. *Bhogta ghura*, or hook swinging by the devotees and *chhau nauch* masked dances are the main attractions of the festival.

The festival is accompanied by a small fair, where a number of sweet and tea stalls and betel and *biri* stalls are to be found. Betting stalls could be counted to at least half a dozen

The ceremonial activities of the festival, involve, besides the Bhumij, the participation of six other castes in specialised roles: The Napit (barbers)—who shave the *bhogtas* ; Brahman who officiate as priests ; Kamar (blacksmith) who rivet nails on the sacred plant, *pat*, and prepare the hook for hook-swinging ; Sahis (the village scavenger) who shouts out the date of the festival ; the Kharia, who prepare the wooden pole for hook-swinging ; and the Dom, who play on drums and other musical instruments.

As we had mentioned before, the contrast with the aboriginal Sarhul Festival, which takes place only two days after the Chait Parab, is quite striking. Here the Bhumij villagers of Madhupur are openly proud of their festival and its displays. Unlike the relatively simple Sarhul Festival, the diverse activities of Chait Parab

continue for five or more days. On the first day, the devotee *bhogtas* are ceremonially shaved. The second and third days are marked by ceremonial baths by the Pat Bhogta and the first offering of *dhup* (incense) and *pradip* (earthen lamp) at the Shibasthan. On the fourth day, the villagers participate in such varieties of activities as the erection of a shed or *Chhamra* over the Shib Linga by the Kharia, rivetting the severed wooden board, *pat*, by the blacksmith and bathing it at the village tank, the performance of Puja by the Brahman at Shiva Linga in the evening, offering sacred flowers, bael leaves unboiled milk, sweets, molasses, honey, melted butter, incense, etc., and the distribution of grams to the fasting *bhogtas* at the end of the Puja. The following day the Brahman again performs Puja at night at the Shivasthan where women from the various Bhumij and other households in the village bring their offerings of sweets, grains, and lamps in small baskets. Around midnight, the performance of *Chhau* dances starts. The dancers, mainly young men of the village, trained for about two months by a special trainer (*ostad*), depict in pantomimes many of the popular themes of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas. The acrobat *natua* dancers also arrive at the sight of the festival and present their performances The sixth or the last day of the festival involves activities such as the erection of a long post of *sal* wood known as *bhogta dang* (the post for swinging of the *bhogtas*) in the morning by the Kharias and later on, the performances of hook swinging, *bhogta ghura*, by one devotee, *bhogta*, after another. At about noon, when the last *bhogta* climbs down after performing hook swinging, the crowd disperses and the festival is formally terminated.

We may also mention some of the other specialisations in this festival which are not to be found in "one-village bound" Sarhul festival.

The Chait Parab at Madhupur is attended by people from about twenty villages in the neigobourhood and the audience includes at least twenty five distinct castes beside the Bhumij. In entertainments one finds the specialised performance of *chhau* dance with varied rhythms and themes; *natua nach* or acrobat dances and visits by a few prostitutes.

Chait Parab has thus many of the flavours of the larger regional festival of Ind Parab, in its combination of fair, multi ethnic participation, visits by prostitutes and complex rituals (although much less Sanskritized). Its marked difference from the latter is in communal sponorship. In the March of 1951, about a month before the beginning of the Chait Parab festival, the villagers were debating in

the popular council, Panchayat, whether the various households in the village should be liable to equal subscription or people should pay in proportion to their wealth, the village chief paying the largest amount. The final decision was that all should pay equal sums.

However, on the occasion of the festival one finds the village headman moving around very proudly in his best dress, giving the air of being the patron of the festival. He receives the members of the Taraf-Sandar's family (the Superior Chief of 59 villages) and also other wealthy Hindu neighbours with special care, giving a flavour of hierarchic differentiation in social interactions with the visitors.

The objectives of observing Chait Parab have both communal and private dimensions. On a communal level, the festival ensures the villagers adequate rainfall and safety from diseases and epidemics. It also operates as a symbol of prestige for the village. On the other hand women come with their offerings to the Shivasthan with special prayers in mind, such as the welfare of their husbands and children and for gaining of capacity to have children in cases of barrenness. The *bhogtas* who observe the penance rites of fasting and hook-swinging do it mainly to have permanent supernatural protection from malevolent spirits and also as mere fun, but not as punishment for their sins.

One should not fail to notice that the culture complex of Chait Parab festival, the sacred spot of Shivasthan and the village level priest or Shiva Laya, with its central objective of safety from disease and assurance of rain operate in somewhat parallel fashion, rivalling the older culture-complex of Sarhul festival, the sacred grove and the priest or Laya and rituals for safety from diseases and assurance of rain. While a generation back, in case of severe dearth of rain it was customary to have the Laya bound hand and foot to lie on his back with folded arms in the *Jahera* to pray to the tutelary gods till the rains came, today the villagers observe fasting or *dharna* at Shivasthan for days together till the god Shiva brings the rains.

Shiva, who is also known lacally as Burha Baba, is often regarded to be the same as Jaher Burha and Durga in regarded to be the same as Bara Devi or Jaher Burhi. Bahadur Singh, a literate Bhumij informant, tells us that Sarhul Parab is in reality the worshipping of the god Shiva : "Shiva used to cover his body with ashes and move around wearing tiger-skin. He used to decorate himself with *dhutura* flowers. In our Jahera we make a garden like the one that Shiva had on the mount Kailas" This is an ingeneous reinterpretation of the tribal tradition relating it to Great Hindu Tradition.

Analysis

We may now utilise to the above three concrete experiences of observvnig three important kinds of festivals as our entry to the task of delineating the main pattern of changes in the Bhumij cycle of festivals. We shall of course, draw examples from some of the other festivals in the Bhumij's annual cycle also.

On the level of *social organisation* the main changes seem to have been the following :—

The locus of some of the major festivals in which the Bhumij villages of Madhupur participate has shifted beyond the village : Ind Parab at Barabazar (12 miles to the east) ; Chhata Parab at Chakultor (20 miles to the northeast) and at Gobarghusi (16 miles to the southeast) ; Ratha Jatra at Balarampur (8 miles to the east) ; etc. The above festival area covers more than one thousand square miles, involving comprehensive or partial participation of at least six hundred or more villages.

Such participation beyond the boundary of one's own village, however, was not entirely absent in aboriginal times. The communal hunting (Phagu Sendra of the Munda and Desh Shikar of the Bhumij) in the spring or summer, is one such festival. But there were not many other festivals of such kind.

Multi-ethinic participation · We find that a festival like that of Ind Parab involves ceremonial participation of at least five distinct castes in different specialised roles. Even on the village level, we found that Chait Parab involves ceremonial participation of six distinct castes in special roles.

Besides such specialized participation, a large festival like Durga Puja at Bamni or Ind Parab at Barabazar becomes the meeting ground of at least 30 different castet Even at Chait Parab, organised mainly by the Bhumij villagers of Madhupur, the visitors included about twenty five distinct castes coming from twenty different villages.

Increasing specialisation of social roles in the festival : We find in some of these festivals such distinct specialised social roles as were not there in the aboriginal pattern. Among these we may mention : ritual performance belonging to a special ethnic group, such as the Brahman priest; entertainers, such as a troup of trained *chhau* dancers and their trainer or *ostad*, dancing girl, *nachni*, and her keeper *rasik* the acrobatic *natua* dancer, prostitutes, etc.

Upper class sponsorship and dominance in some festivals, such as : Durga Puja at Bamni, Chhata Parab at Gobarghusi, and Ind Parab at Barabazar which are intiated by the Taraf-Sardars of Pancha

Sardari and Satrakhani and the Zamindar of Pargannah Barabhum respectively. Each of the above festivals operates clearly as symbolic validizor of the superior status of the respective sponsor and is controlled by people beloning to the upper status groups.

Segmentation of the village community in the organised performance of communal festivals : In village Madhudur, we find today that festivals such as the Sarhul and Jantal are organised by the blocks of hamlets separately. Even greater segmentation is observed in Magh Puja, Baram Baita, and Banbhojan festivals ; each of which is now organised by each of the *tolas* or the hamlets of the village separately.

Restrictions on women's participation : It has been already mentioned that women are barred from participating in group-dances or *pana nach* in Sarhul festival. Besides this, the higher one moves up the social classes among the Bhumij, one finds the women less free to visit festivals in the neighbouring or distant villages.

However, this external restriction on female participation should not be meant to signify that there has been uniform reduction of the scope of women's participation in the festivals In fact, the situation is sometimes quite the reverse. We find today a number of festivals whose intiative is largely restricted to the women, such as in Tusu, Jitua and Karam Parab We do not find anything equivalent to this among the aboriginal Ho or Munda.

In *cultural contents* the concrete changes have been mainly the following :

The major traditional festivals such as Sarhul or Maghe have become attenuated and some important components of the traditional festivals have been largely discarded such as cattle, pigs and fowl as objects of sacrifice, group dancing by women and open social drinking of rice-beer or distilled liquor from *mahua* flowers.

We also find that in the contents of prayers of the still-maintained traditional festivals, names of some Sanskritic or Sanskritised deities have been incorporated, such as Ganesha, Dharma, Bhagaban, Panch Devata, etc., who are mentioned along with such traditional gods as Jaher Bura, Jaher Buri, various hill spirits and so on. The pattern of prayers in the village level festivals, however has remained unchanged. They are done in day to day conversational Barabhumia Bengali dialect, understood by the villagers. Among the articles of worship we find such Hindu (?) elements as grass blades, *gulanch* flowers, *kajal*, *methi*, etc, which we do not find in the traditional rituals of the Munda or the Ho.

Besides the general picture of reduction of many of the traditional festivals, we also find specialised complex developments both in the village-level and larger festivals. Among these we may mention: specialised dances and drama, elaborations in songs and elaborations in the pantheon.

In connection with changes in organisation we already mentioned the various kinds of entertainers. Let us now look briefly into the performances.

In *Natua Nach* which are performed by solo acrobats to the accompaniment of beating of drums by drummers, usually belonging to the Dom caste, the dancer does not attempt to pantomime any traditional Hindu myths or other sacred lore His main role is to display pleasant, rhythmic, acrobatic skills, with abundant emphasis on variations in the expression of the face and of the eyes.

The masked *chhau* dances, however, invariably have themes selected from the Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The most frequently enacted topics from the Mahabharata are Draupadir Bastraharan (robbing Draupadi of her dress), Pasha Khela (the game of dice), Hiramba Badh (The killing of the demon Hiramba), Jayadrather Apaman (humiliation of Jayadratha), Duhshashan Badh (killing of Duhshashan), and Abhimanyu Badh (killing of Abhimanyu). The most popular scenes from the Ramayana are Ram Laksman Sitar Bana Jatra (Rama Lakhsman and Sita goes to the forest), Taraka Badh (killing of the demoness Taraka), Surpanakhar Nasika Chhadan (choppings-off of the nose of the demoness Surpanakha), Maya Mriga Sita Haran (abduction of Sita), Bali Badh (killing of Bali), Lanka Dahan (burning of the city of Lanka), Indrajit Badh (killing of the demon Indrajit), Kumbhakarna Badh (killing of the demon Kumbhakarna), and Raban Badh (killing of Raban). It is interesting to note how a vast majority of the dances have a battle or fight as the central theme. Besides these pantomimes there are also regular drill dances, known as *mel tal*, which the people conceive as rhythmic marches of soldiers.

The performance of the *Chhau* dances which starts in the evening, commences with a dance in honour of Sanskritic god Ganesha, the divine master of the ceremony, for blessings on the performances. Various pantomimes continue for fifteen to twenty minutes; each being preceded by a short introductory song, know as *rang*. These *Chhau* dances appear to be the most effective media for familiarising the Bhumij with some of the major themes in the Epics and the Puranas.

Whereas the *chhau natch* troupes are trained locally by specialist *ostads* or trainers, living in the general region of Barabhum, the theatre parties or *Jatras* come from the city of Purulia or from towns farther off, such as Bankura. In their performances, they too take up traditional Sanskritic themes, but display them in more detail in four or six hour dramas rather than in fifteen minute pantomime dances of *chhau natch*. Whereas *chhau natch* is organised by many villages communally on the occasion of Chait Parab, *jatras* are usually organised by former superior village chiefs, such as Taraf Sardars of Panch Sardari or Satrakhani and the Zamindar of Barabhum.

In Songs, too, we find a corresponding elaboration in content and style, as well as in their increasing reference to Sanskritic tradition

In contrast to the traditional two or four line, local-experience-bound, simple songs that we still find in Karam, Sarhul and many of the Tusu songs, we also find longer songs, with complex ornamentation and reference to Sanskritic tradition. The theme of celestial love of the lord Krishna and Radha permeates many of these more complex songs, especially in those sung with dances by dancing girls, *nachni*.

One often finds simpler and more ornamented versions existing side by side. Thus Tusu songs sung by the village maidens of Madhupur are very much phrased in terms of local experiences in two or four line verses, while one also gets printed Tusu songs, composed by special literati, which are favourites of men visiting Makar of Tusu festivals at Dulmi or Satighata. The main theme of these latter songs, again, is the celestial love of Radha and Krishna described in very elaborate styles. In Karam festivals, too, the contrast between the simple Karam songs and those associated with *nabhi nach* dances that follow, is quite striking. A few songs, in free translations, are cited below as examples :

Sarhul Song

"In the backyard of our house, elder brother !
The partridge takes its bath
Spreading the earth all over its body."

Karam Songs

(a) A simple form
"A handful of *surgunja* blooms in deep red
My daughter has been married far away
And my heart weeps in agony."

(b) A complex *nachni* song
"With great care I encircled the sea to get some gems

The sea got dry, the gem lay hidden ; all due to the ill fate of the unfortune one.

With great care I planted *champa* tree with its beautiful glistening leaves.

As I pluck the flowers, the branch falls off ; all due to the ill fate of the unfortunate one.

In the house of the unfortunate one you find the cocoanut tree
And in my friend's house is the *bael* tree

The *bael* ripened, the friend did not come ; he led me to such despair.

With great care Gauri sat to make turmeric paste
Rai (the Lord Kishha) was reminded of the colourful turmeric-pasted feet of his beloved one."

Tusu Songs

(a) A simple one.

"The *jam* tree is at the front door
The bird alights on it for *jam* fruit.
The bird has a bead necklace, see how wonderful it is
The lotus blooms on banana tree.

(b) A complex one.

"Lord Krishna dances in presence of his mother
In what joy he dances in presence of his mother
How many cowherds and cowherdesses go to see this
How much of cheese and curd men give him to eat.
How many gods come with their wives flying in chariots across the sky.
To see the celestial dance of the Lord Krishna Brahmà comes riding the swan and Indra come riding the elephant Airabat.
Shiva comes with Parbati, riding a bull
Sidam and Subal also go to dance
Gora (the composer) states that the sun is high up in the sky

We may note in passing that while war and heroism are the main themes in the masked dances, the songs abound in tender emotions, often emphasizing pathos in love.

Many of the contemporary festivals involve the worship of painted clay idols, as in Saraswati Puja, Manasa Puja, Durga Puja, Kali Puja, etc. These idols are usually made by craftsmen belonging to a special caste known in this area as the Chhutor.

The existence of market-like interactions in the fairs that temporarily grow around the place of the festival is also another distinctive feature of festivals of to-day.

Reference to an enlarged pantheon of Sanskritic gods and Sanskritic sacred lore or myths marks an important line of departure from the traditional pattern of festivals. Sanskritic gods, such as Indra, Durga, Shiva, Manasa, Kali, and Saraswati, remain as the key emblems in many of the festivals, namely Ind Parab, Durga Puja, Chait Parab, Manasa Puja, Bandhna Parab and Saraswati Puja festivals, respectively. We mentioned how, even in traditional festivals such as the Sarhul, Sanskritic gods such as Ganesha, Shiva, Kali, Durga, Manasa, Pancha Debata, etc., are included along with traditional deities like Jaher Bura, Jaher Buri, Dessauli, Kamin Buri, etc., in the prayers. In the case of some of the aboriginal festivals, we also find the names of the festivals being Sanskritised. Thus Jantal Parab is known in villages as Asarhi Puja, Mage Parab as Magh Puja, and so on. We also find in many cases aboriginal festivals now being held in astronomically fixed dates according to the Hindu Sacred Calender. Thus Jantal Parab and Dalma Puja take place on the Hindu sacred date of Ambabachi in the month of Asarh, Delde Buru Parab takes place on the sacred date of Makar Sankranti in the month of Paus. Sanskritic texts such as Sri Sri Chandi are read in the Durga Puja festival at Banni. Besides such reference to traditional Sanskrit sacred texts, we also find elaborate regional myths, transmitted orally or written in the regional vernacular dialect, such as Karamer Brata Kata or Jimut Bahaner Kahini, recited on the occasion of Karam and Jitua Parabs respectively.

Looked at as more abstract cultural processes, we may say that the 'aboriginal' or 'little traditional' festivals of the Bhumij have been mainly subjected to the following process of change :

Attenuation : We have already given the example of how Sarhul festivals in Madhupur has become simplified and rid of some of its elaborations, Even more drastic simplification is observed in Magh Puja, the modern version of the once important Maghe Parab, which does not even have special songs associated with it.

Becoming Secret : Some festivals which have attained derogatory connotation in the eyes of the Hindu neighbours are now-a days observed in partial or complete secrecy from outsides. The Sarhul festival is observed in such partial secrecy, while Bhangat Kudra Puja, in which a pig is sacrificed, is worhipped in complete secrecy.

Fusion with traditional Hindu festivals : The Dalma hill ranges, the ancient abode of the traditional presiding deity of the hill, Dalma Pat, also shelters a stone phallic symbol of Shiva. While on the tenth day of the darker half of the month of Asarha (June-July), the

Bhumij priest of Laya performs the Dalma-Puja, offering prayers to Dalma Pat as well as to Shiva, on the night of Shiva Chaturdasi; in the same month, a festival is observed in honour of Lord Shiva by a Brahman Sadhu. The latter festival is patronised by the Taraf Sardar of Satrahkhani. In the mind of the Bhumij Laya, as well as that of an average Bhumij villager, the traditional deity of Dalma Pat is identified with Shiva.

Similar fusion of a little traditional festival with one of Sanskritic tradition is marked in Karam festival where the participant girls carried some of the seedlings offered to Karam Puja at home to Barabazar and threw them toward the raising *Ind Dang* for the great traditional god Indra. The traditional Bandhna festival in Kartic (November) is similarly fused with the worship of Sanskritic goddess Kali at night.

Reinterpretation : In Karam festival we find that the aboriginal worship of *karam* tree and its presiding spirit Karam Deota for the fertility in crops and women have undergone linguistic transformation of *karma* and have obtained the supplementary connotation of purity in ethical action, referable to the Sanskritic concept of *Karma*.

Similar reinterpretation is to be found in the concept of Dharam Deota, whose name is invoked in the beginning of every village-level festival. Dharam Deota is conceived by the Bhumij both as Sun God and also as the presiding deity of moral actions. Risley (1891), Das (1924), Chattopadhaya (1942), and Bhattacharya (1952), find Dharam Deota as a Hinduised version of the Mundari Sun God and Supreme Being, Sing Bonga.

It is hard to decide by what steps the ancient Mundari Sun God, Sing Bonga, has come to be known as Dharam Deota among the Bhumij (Bhattacharaya, 1952 : 117–153). But this linguistic transformation or borrowing has helped it to acquire in addition to the concept of Sun God, the additional Hinduised connotation of "guardian of ethical behaviour" or *dharma*.

Competition and Substitution : Although in the co existence and fusion of little traditional and 'Great Traditional' festivals we find instances of cultural compromise (metaphorically speaking) and synthesis ; the Great Traditional festivals also, in cases, operate as competitors and may ultimately displace or substitute the 'little'.

Thus Chait Parab appears to be well on the way to displacing Sarhul festival, appearing almost at the same time, emphasizing similar themes of assurance of rain and removal of sickness and manifesting itself in relatively more gorgeous display. Hinduised Tusu Parab of today, observed after harvesting operations, appears to have repla-

ced the traditional Maghe Parab in many Bhumij villages in the area.

In the introduced Great Hindu Traditional festivals in the Bhumij Tribal area, in their turn, we find corresponding changes. Fusion with local festivals is exemplified in the conjunction of Ind and Karam festivals, Kali Puja and Bandhna and so on.

Besides such total conjunction of great and little traditional festivals, each remaining somewhat distinct, we also find Great Traditional festivals incorporating "aspects" of aboriginal culture, and also in cases being reinterpreted in terms of little traditional experience of the Bhumij villages and thus being parochialised.

During Durga Puja festival at Bamni, we find the Taraf Sardar, who is the sponsor of the festival, going out ceremonially to the forest to offer obeisance to *tesa* bird, which is traditionally regarded as the totem of the clan Badda. Thus the Great Traditional festival of Durga Puja absorbs the local tribal tradition of totemism. We mentioned before that goddess Durga is often regarded by the non-literate Bhumij as the same as Jaher Burhi.

During the Saraswati Puja festival at Magh (January-February) at village Purnapani, we find the people from surrounding villages assembling on the neighbouring upland Ranga Tanr, enjoying the non-Sanskritic sport of cock-fighting. The festival site was formerly one of the sacred groves of village Purnapani and still shows the remnants of the grove in a few *sal* trees. Even twenty years ago this was the site of a contemporary version of the aborginal Maghe parab locally known as Pitha Chhanka, which was officiated over by the Bhumij priest. Sahan Singh, the headman of the village and one of the influential assistants of the Taraf Sardar of Panch Sandari, in Bhumij-Khastriya caste mobility movement, decided to start the festival of worshipping goddess Saraswati in the same place on the date of observance of the Pitha Chhanka festival. Since 1936, for a few years the two festivals existed side by side and were being observed simultaneously, till the ritual aspects of the aboriginal festival were given up while the ritual of worshipping the image of Saraswati continued in full vigour. While the core rituals of the aboriginal festivals have been given up, the patteren of entertainment persists and is conjoined with the traditional Hindu Saraswati Puja. The latter festival is now enlivened by group dances of Santal women, *nachni* dances, and cock fighting on the day following the Puja. We thus find that the process of parochialisation, instead of simplification, often leads to elaborations unique to a locality or region. Celebrating the worship of the goddess Saraswati, with cock-fighting

would be inconceivable in a traditional Hindu village of West or East Bengal.

In general, we may state that there has been a distinct "shift of prestige", to the introduced non-aboriginal, Hinduised festivals On the other hand, we find that the Bhumijes' sentimental loyalty to such traditional festivals as the Sarhul persist to a large extent. We mentioned before that the neglect of such essential elements as the offering of fowl and rice-beer, ceremonial group dancing by women, etc., in the traditional festivals under the pressure of prestige drive, create in them a feeling of guilt and also a fear that the neglect of their long-standing friendly gods might bring them some harm.

The transformation in Bhumij ceremonial cycle cannot be described by such blanket terms as "secularisation". Transformation here is not consistently in the direction of "holiday" from "holy day". *In fact we might say with some confidence that sacred cultural performances in festivals of the Bhumij have become more elaborate through Hindu contacts and also through internal development.* This, however, does not mean that the festivals as a whole have become more *sacred* in terms of the "attitude" of the Bhumij villagers. With reference to the most of the large scale festivals outside their village, we may say that for the Bhumij villager, of Madhupur, those are mainly places of fun (although the festivals have elaborate ritualistic relevance to the sponsor families), there being little feeling of supernatural gain through participating in those festivals. There are, however, exceptions to these, as in the case of Makar Parab at Chhata Pukur or Satighata where taking sacred baths in the Subarnarekha river has as much ritual connotation as in any aboriginal festival. We may also note that the Bhumij villagers of Madhupur are occasionally found to offer sacrifices to the goddess Durga during the Durga Puja festival at Bamni, as fulfillment of a vow to the goddess for curing sickness. For such specific families Durga Puja has deep ritualistic connotation.

One may also point out that in some of the extra-village, larger festivals women participate to a greater extent in the ritualistic aspects of the festivals than the male Bhumij. For example, when the women throw *jawa* seedlings toward the raising *Ind Dang* pole, the Ind Parab festival has more ritualistic connotation to them than for the average male Bhumij visitor to the festival.

Taken as a whole, in comparison with their aboriginal pattern, we may say that the contemporary Bhumij villager has been participating in a relatively more secularised form of behaviour in *some* of the outer festivals than they ever did before while at home, at the

same time, they are participating in a relatively more complex sacred culture.

Mechanism of Transformation

Besides the obvious factor of large-scale immigration of various Hindu Castes, bringing in their own patterns of festivals, mostly from West Bengal, the most important organisational basis of the transformation in the pattern of festivals has been the factor of the formation of feudalised states among the Bhumij in this area since several centuries before the British occupation of Barabhum in 1765. The majority of the larger Hinduised festivals in the area are sponsored by the Bhumij derived pseudo-Khsatriya feudal super-chiefs, Taraf-Sardars, Zemindar, etc.

There are evidences that in most cases, the social process of formation of state preceded the organisation of large-scale festivals. Whereas state-like political structure of Barabhum with it's feudalised hierarchy was firmly established at least one or two centuries before 1765, we find the Durga Puja being performed by the Taraf Sardar of Panch Sardari only since about the middle of the nineteenth century. Chhata. Parab at Gobarghusi is being organised by the Taraf Sardar of Satrakhani only since the first decade of the twentieth century.

The pattern laid by the feudal overlord has been the model for the lower order of chiefs. Thus Taraf Sardars of Satrakhani and Panchasardari imitated the Super-Chief of Pargannah Barabhum in observing Chhata Parab and Durga Puja festivals respectively. Even on the village level at Madhupur, we find the Ghatowal or the village chief sponsoring a very reduced version of Durga Puja in September–October with an earthen pot or *ghat* instead of building an image of Durga.

While feudalisation and formation of state lies in the background of a large number of festivals, some others have been communicated to the Bhumij directly by the lower caste Hindu immigrants from Bengal. Among these we may mention Manasa Puja, Kali Puja, Jitva Puja, Tusu etc. The lower Hindu castes, in their turn, have been drawn to accept some of the aboriginal tribal festivals such as Jantal, Karam, Magh Puja, Baram Baita, etc.

From our descriptions we have not been able to trace any neat development of an aboriginal festival into a larger or more universalised one which has obtained Great Traditional dimension out of local or regional development processes—(Marriott, 1955).

The cases where the processes in the direction of universalisa-

tion appear fairly transparent are those where "little tribal traditions" have become conjoined with the Great Tradition of the Hindus: the latter often being sponsored by feudal chiefs. In the conjunction of aboriginal Karam Parab and more universal Ind Parab, we presented one such case

We have also indicated that transformations have taken place through linguistic change and syncretic reinterpretion. Thus we find that the worship of the presiding spirit of Karam tree changed into worship of the god Karma Raj who rewards pure ritual action and around whom grow elaborate myths. Similar transformation was indicated in the change of Sing-Bonga (Sun God) to Dharma Deota, who, in addition to being the Sun-God, becomes also the guardian spirit of religiousness.

If we travel a little north of Pargannah Barabhum to the village Baghmundi, the capital of the Zemindar of Pargannah Baghmundi, we find the Zemindar family worshipping the traditional Mundari god Marang Buru, the presiding deity of the mountain, and his wife Chuprungi, as the guardian spirits of their lineage. Marang Buru has to be worshipped by a Bhumij Laya and his wife Chuprungi is worshipped by the Zemindar himself. In the minds of all the permanently resident Hindu castes in Pargannah Baghmundi these two deities Marang Buru and Chuprungi have become equivalent in status to any other important Hindu gods.

Such small range regional universalisation of tribal gods through the sanction of the feudal overlords is also evidenced at Ichagarh, where the tribal mountain god Andhari Buru, now known as Andhari Pat Burha Thakur, is recognised as the guardian spirit of the royal lineage of Patkum. Adhari Pat Burha Thakur has attained prestige equivalent to Sanskritic Hindu gods in the eyes of the older Hindu inhabitants of Pargannah Patkum, and is often looked at as being the same as Shiva. Should we conceive the pattern of transformation in the cycle of festivals among the tribal Bhumij of Manbhum as orthogenetic or heterogenetic, to use Redfield and Singer's terms (Redfield and Singer, 1954)? If we look at the immediate or recent perspective of history, we would see in them the interaction of two somewhat distinctive configurations of religious traditions—a case of heterogenetic development. On the other hand, we are impressed by the more or less comfortable adaptation of the tribal culture to a more complex setting with more differentiated ethnic groups interacting, a larger volume of people coming from a wider geographical area in communication, sometimes under more organised political control. Many of the aboriginal festivals persist, although often in

an attenuated form; some get fused with the complex festivals of the immigrant Hindus; some attain reinterpreted connotations, communicable to a larger audience. A more complex and yet sacred tradition emerges in the region. The central themes of the aboriginal festivals, good harvest, desire for children and avoidance of sickness still runs supreme in the contemporary scenes; while the additional emergent themes are those of prestige, the sovereignty of the chief, ablusion of sin by sacred bath, etc.

At this stage, to indulge in an argument whether the transformation is heterogenetic or orthogenetic in a *specific historic sense* will not be profitable. All that we would be led to say is that many of the processes of transformation of the tribal scene appear to be *analogous to*, although perhaps not identical with, the processes by which the early stages of Indic civilisation developed through the simultaneous growth of primary urbanisation, state-like political structures, and the conversion of the tribal people into peasantry, finally encompassing these various levels of human groupings under a common complex sacred tradition.

NOTES

1 A preliminary version of this paper was presented by the writer in a seminar on "Comparison of Cultures: Little and Great Traditions of India—Interaction of Tribal, Peasant and Urban Dimensions," conducted jointly by Professors Robert Redfield, Milton B. Singer and the writer at the University of Chicago in the Spring of 1956. This paper was originally published in the Journal of Social Research Vol I No 1. It is being reproduced here with certain modifications for larger circulation.

2 Exception to this is to be found in the Soso Bonga festival of the Munda in which a special medicine-man, Deonra chants a Munda song in which the story of Sing Bonga and the twelve Asur brothers and thirteen Deota brothers is related-(Roy, 1912 482)

3 Circumstantial evidences indicate that the Raj family, although declaring themselves as Rajput Khastriya for several generations, originally belonged to the Bhumij tribe. Madhupur is one among 330 or more villages under the Raja of Barabhum.

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RELIGION[1], TECHNOLOGY AND EVOLUTION : A CASE STUDY OF A MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Louis Dupree

For decades anthropologists and other social scientists or humanists have tenaciously clung to the belief that a people will cling tenaciously to their religious beliefs when confronted by a technologically superior culture. Obviously, observable acculturation occurs more rapidly and with less strain in the economic sphere The strain is one of relative degree, however, because of the intricate relationship between religion and economy. Weber's (1930) studies relating the Protestant Ethic to capitalistic free enterprise and the Roman Catholic Church to basically agrarian economies should be familiar to all

New technological elements cannot be introduced without *attendant ideological implications. Machines, tools and techniques* are as value-laden as abstract statements of the ideology itself. Therefore, a technological innovation in the economic sphere produces an approximately equal strain on both economic and religious institutions. Often our foreign aid experts fail to realize this, piously denying *that we intend to interfere in the internal affairs of the country* being aided. In our own cultural backyard, the ultimate configurations of automation are frightening—but inevitable

Even Mohammed Iqbal (1876–1938), the synthesizer of Islam and the modern world and the inspirational father of Pakistan, preached the necessity of combining Western ideology and technology with modern Islam (Iqbal, 1934) In doing so, the Muslims "are only resuming the heritage of their own civilization." (Gibb, 1949, 185). The motif recurs again and again in his poetic writings (Kiernan, 1955.).

Church-State Duality

Another truism which continually raises its unwashed head is : Church and state can never be completely separate. The Communists in Russia have recognized this and created their own unique church-state situation. We of the United States still bow to the Protestant Ethic—free enterprise duality and have yet to elect a Catholic president. As late as 1905 France *officially* and *legally* separated church and state. From the time of Nepolean I to 1905, the French government paid the salaries of the clergy and financially supported all faiths in

proportion to their members. The legal separation between religion and politics is therefore quite recent in France, so it is not strange that we find a large number of devout French Catholics who vote Communist:

> "In my private Pantheon of French individuals there is an old lady who has a niche next to Roger. I met her during the election campaign of 1946. It was in a fishing village in Catholic Brittany the day after elections. The village had voted 90 per cent Communist and I had come to find out why Communism had made such inroads in traditionally anti-Communist, devout Brittany."
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> "As I strolled through town I saw a parade coming down the main street. At the head of the procession was the cure in his ceremonial vestments. Behind him was the Communist mayor, wearing the tricolor sash of office and behind him were the fishermen in striped Breton jerseys and hip length rubber boots. I followed the procession down the street, then through a narrow lane leading to the beach, where the men climbed into their skiffs and began rowing out to the herring fleet The priest stood in the prow, holding a huge cross over the water."
>
> "I spoke to a group of women who were standing on the beach watching their men, and one very old lady told me that they were preparing to go through the ancient ceremony of blessing the waters, before putting to sea I asked her to explain to a foreigner just why men who had voted solidly Communist were still going through this ceremony and why the priest was willing to bless anti Catholic fishermen. She looked at me in surprise and replied. 'Why, our sons are all good Catholics. They vote Communist because the Communists fight hard for our wages and for the price of the fish, but still, my son, make no mistake about it, only God can make the west wind blow." (Schoenbrum, 1957, 195.)

Another facet of the church-state inseparateness is brought out in a recent article by Stirling. He points out that Islam in Turkey did not wither away when Ataturk separated church and state in 1928, but continued to grow *within* the Turkish cultural pattern in spite of official pressures which discouraged many non-functional Islamic practices. "The relaxation of this official pressure (in 1950) caused what looks like a revival, but is in fact only, so to speak, the religious stream emerging from an underground section of its course. But more fundamental than these oscillations, *the process of secularization continues* (italics mine), perceptibly in the villages, vigorously in the towns. This is not so much a matter of the decreasing performance of religious rituals, but of a decline in the number of socially important activities to which religion is relevant, and a change in

the way of thinking to a less theocratic view of the universe." (Stirling, 1958, 408.)

Religious Changes Without Technological Change

In such situations the religious changes are minor and are usually the result of missionary activity undisturbed by intrusive *economic activity. In other words,* the area has souls to exploit but no exploitable economic resources worth the attentions of a technologically advanced people. The missionary has not interfered too much in the *total* cultural pattern, and has been accepted by the society. The people have adopted minor changes, but have not *adopted the trappings of civilized (i e., literate) Christianity. No* technology is involved. Two examples will suffice.

Few new techniques have been introduced in the economy of the South African Bushman. They have often been externally disturbed by their technologically superior neighbors, such as the Hottentots, Herero, and Europeans of various stripe and driven deeper into the Kalahari. Casual contacts with European settlements have brought about several changes in the mythology of the Bushman. One group, the Kung, once believed that their high god lived in a thatched hut similar to that of the Hottentot—the epitome of architectural luxury to the nomadic Kung, who live in makeshift windbreaks. Now, however, the high god is thought to dwell in a European type house with a galvanized tin roof. (Dyson, personal communication, 1959)

Several head hunting tribes in Neatherlands New Guinea have been penetrated by Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries. In order to gain closer rapport with the men of these native groups, *some missionaries have actually held services in the men's club* houses...complete with trophy heads ! Often the head hunters have accepted the missionary as a man, but not his religion. For example :

> "The Catholic priests founded a mission-post at Enarotali, but they were not alone in the field for long. Some American *Protestant missionaries arrived who were members of a strict* sect which was strongly opposed to smoking and drinking. Soon the capaukoos were regular churchgoers and prayed and sang *witch fervour, although these hardened polygamists and almost* professional murderers could hardly agree with many points in the doctrine that was preached to them They appraised the *merits of the two churches with an astute eye. There were the* Catholic priests, who refused to baptize men with three or four wives, but what was the use of baptism, anyway to capaukoo. *The Catholics were lenient in other respects. They had no* objection at all to smoking The Papuans felt more attracted

to them than to ascetic Americans, whose faith did not forbid baptism of a polygamist. No capaukoo can resist tobacco He grows a little patch in his garden, enough to cover his requirements, but they are always ready for more. The Catholic priests who gave them an occasional cigarette, were favorites in this struggle for souls The Protestant rivals, who knew this, were faced with a serious dilemma. Could they allow these people to commit heresy or should they also give them cigarettes ? Did the sinful means justify the holy ends ? They did, it was decided, and thereafter the Capaukoos who came to sing and pray in the Protestant Church received a cigarette after the Sunday service.

"A year later there was a painful searching of consciences. 'Are we not really encouraging these people in their sinful habits instead of eradicating the evil in their soul ?' the missionaries asked themselves. 'Anyway, the Capaukoos had some idea of Christian doctrine by now and might as well be told the whole sad truth'. Next Sunday, it was announced to them that they would no longer get cigarettes because smoking is sinful. And the Sunday following the church was empty.

"The missionary visited one of their chiefs, a man of some standing, to ask him why nobody had come to sing. The Capukoo's answer was short and to the point. 'No tobacco, ho hallelujah.' (Smedits, 1955, 49–50).

In an economic sense the Bushman and the New Guinea head hunters have not been penetrated by the west, and therefore only minor changes, mainly evolutionary, have resulted from casual contacts with representatives of the west. But note that the religious sphere began to adjust first. Many other examples exist, but lack of space precludes their citation at this time.

Outside Impetus, Internal Economic Change

In such instances, a culture adopts a technology or part of a technology and then develops the chosen items within the local or national cultural pattern. Changes occur at all levels, but without external control, or with a modicum of external interference. The rise of the Japanese nation as an industrial power is the classic example. The Japanese accepted Western technology but developed it within their own peculiar pattern, which ultimately reinforced Shintoism, the state religion, as industrialization and mechanization increased in volume and tempo. (Embree, 1945).

The American Indian offers another case in point. The religion of the white man often did not deeply influence Indian culture, even after most tribes were placed on reservations. The one Christian idea which had the most impact on the Indian (the Messianic complex of

the 1890's) proved deletrious to Indian survival. (Money, 1896). The Indian also accepted certain technological items which contributed to his downfall : the gun and the horse, with which he could hunt buffalo (and other Indians) much more efficiency. (Wissler, 1914).

The Eskimo adopted the steel trap, the gun, and the outboard motor ; each helped disturb the delicate balance of game and fish and often made him dependent on the white man for subsistence. (Lantis, 1952). The white man did not try to change the culture of the Indian, but to shove him on a reservation so that his lands and resources could be exploited. This process is still in progress The white man did not encourage the Eskimo to change his way of life, merely to trap himself to economic death so that the fur company could survive in a cutthroat business.

The important point here is that the white man did not try to integrate the Indian into the *economic* life of the area ; after all the Indian and Eskimo were *already* integrated. Instead, to make way for "progress", the Indian was driven from his integrated situation into the artificial boundaries of a reservation, and the Eskimo was trapped on the cycle of more traps, more game, more guns, more ammunition, more outboard motors, more seal pelts, more gasoline—*no time for subsistence activities.*

A startling thought intrudes, merely a passing thought, but one worth serious investigation. When a culture accepts or rejects items from another culture, does it always choose those items which are valuable over the short term, but which may ultimately destroy? Is modern man at such a crossroads today?

Cultural Conquest of the Conquering Barbarians

Much has been written in archæological (Childe, 1946) and historical (Toynbee, 1935-54) terms about the military conquests of civilized, urbanized peoples by nomadic "barbarians" and the subsequent cultural conquests of the "barbarians" by civilization. The resulting bastardized, highly vigorous, amalgam eventually declines and, in turn, is conquered by another "barbarian" group, which is then swallowed up or rather acculturated with the conquered peoples. Toynbee is replete with such going on. Here as in our other examples, the superior technology and its accompanying religious ideology wins out in the end. The gods of neither group suffer; they join hands in holy matrimony. If the priests of the conquered city object to this crossbow and chariot marriage, they are, quite sensibly, executed by the conquerers.

Advanced Technology Physically Introduced from the Outside

This process operates through invasion and occupation (classic imperialism, either capitalist or communist), or massive economic aid The Russians have been able to clarify several points in the cultural dynamics involved by experimenting with forced migrations and the collectivization of minority groups[2]. The Volga Tartars were used extensively as "guinea pigs" to test social change theories. About three million (the largest minority group In the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) of these Turkic-speaking, Sunni Muslims live scattered from just east of Moscow to central Siberia. They are the most literate of the Russian Muslim *narody*, and were the most active in Pan-Turanist movements In the late 1920's the Soviets systematically used the Volga Tartars as "guinea pigs" for collectivization experiments. The people accepted collectivization, forced migration, and anti-religious dogmas with a minimum of friction *if* their *mullahs* (religious leaders) were removed If the *mullahs* were allowed to remain with the collectivization group, trouble invariably resulted After mullahs were removed from dissident groups, collectivization and the de-emphasis of Islam proceeded comfortably

Oil caused the Soviets to develop Azerbaijan rapidly at the cultural expense of the local Turkic population. As the religious leaders were removed much of the traditional Islamic culture was destroyed. Today the Azeri Turks work the Baku oil fields, refineries, and the oil transport industries of Azerbaijan.

Pipes (1955) discusses similar developments (especially the destruction of Islamic ritual obligations) in the five republics of Soviet Central Asia : Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizistan. The degree of changes in any given area exists in direct proportion to Soviet economic interest

In all of these Soviet examples forced collectivization speeded up when the local Muslim clergy was removed After the collectivization succeeded and religion successfully de emphasized, especially its ritual aspects, the church was permitted to exist, just as in modern secular Turkey. Obviously, therefore, political Communism can be made compatible with *any* form of religion.

Under much less totalitarian aspects, Margaret Mead found the same lack of religious resistance to change in her excellent call-back study to the Admiralty Islands (Mead, 1956). Actually, the most radical cultural shifts among the Manus were in the religious not the economic sphere. The people still use the same type of canoe,

and fish in the same way they did in 1928. Religion did not resist the administrative or ideological changes. Instead, the religion shifted rapidly as the technology of the machine age reached the Manus during World War II. "The Manus had invented a new religion, compound of American bulldozers and their old ghosts, and turning their backs on Christianity, had become complete mystics" (Mead 1956, 160). Mead found that the religion of the Manus did not resist, but actually aided the "New Way" as it spread Natives who never saw American soldiers (one million passed through the area built "radio towers" to communicate with the super-natural. Many villages were rebuilt the houses oriented in the row on row manner of Army camps The important point here is that there was no organized hierachy among the native groups to resist technological-or ideological-encroachments.

Why Religions Seem to Resist

The evidence presented raises the following question. In the examples cited (as well as many others uncited) the pattern seems to be acceptance of (or compromise with) the ideology accompanying a technology. Why, therefore, have we anthropologists and others so long insisted that groups avidly resist acculturation in the religious sphere ? The answer, or at least part of it, is relatively simple. A vested interest group will squeal when its interests are threatened. Since technological innovations affect the religious sphere of any culture, the religious vested interest groups will quite naturally and sincerely make the loudest noises when their flocks begin to accept any part of a new ideology. As technology "advances," religious rituals often lose functional importance. People listen to their religious leaders, however, long after rituals have lost their meanings. In a literate society, the clergy is usually very literate ; in a non-literate society the clergy is usually very articulated. In both cases, the clergy is extremely noisy, and powerful.

A brief look at another modern non literate society with a sophisticated literate religion will help emphasize the relative ease with which technology can be introduced and evolve without religious resistance—until the clergy is aroused.

The Role of the Mullah in Muslim Afghanistan : Religious Illiteracy in Literate Religions, An Aid to Technological Innovations

Today Afghanistan is one of the strictest Sunni Muslim countries ; only the Wahhābis of Saudi Arabia can claim more purity and closer adherence to the pristine tenants of early Islam. The five

pillars (*shahāda*) or profession of faith ; *sala* or prayer ; *zakā* or alms giving ; *saum* or fasting ; *hajj* or pilgrimage) are ever present realities, and I know of one octogenarian Pathan who saved for forty years in order to make the *hajj* to Mekka Few Afghans consume alcoholic beverages, which are expensive as well as forbidden by the Koran. Although many Afghans smoke *chars* (hasheesh) or *teryāk* (opium, especially in the north and near Iran), little addiction exists. Here, the drugs, usually taken in mild doses, replace the after dinner drink of the West Legally women must always wear a *burkā*, a sack-like garment which covers the body from head to toe, in public ; hazy vision is permitted by embroidered lattice work in front of the eyes. Tamped earth praying platforms are scattered along the main motorable roads for the benefit of those Muslims who travel on the wildly driven, gaudily painted autobuses. Foreign missionary activity is forbidden, and just after World War II, the Afghan government refused permission for an American missionary group to build a gift hospital because the group indicated it planned to proselytize patients within the hospital grounds.

Unlike the Christian clergy, the Muslim religious leaders and holy men have no hard and fast hierarchy, no fountainhead from which each major sect can appeal for a ruling or from which flows bulls or edicts to dictate policy. Islamic religious law and secular law are one and the same, in varying degrees by country. The ties are strongest in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, weakest in Turkey, where church and state have been separate since the rule of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

At the national level, Afghanistan is officially a Sunni country, adhering to the Hanafi *sharī'a* (school of theology), one of the most important schools in Sunni Islam. The other important theological division, the Shī'a, broke away from the original orthodox Sunni group, and supported Alī, Mohammad's son-in-law as caliph. What began as a political movement developed into a religious dogma This, however, need not concern us here, because the overwhelming majority of the Afghans are Sunni.

Since the reign of 'Abdur-Rahmān, first amir of modern Afghanistan (1880–1901), the Hanafi clergy has been paid from government funds. This includes the *qāzis* (judges who are civil servants under the jurisdiction of the ministry of justice, but who must know religious as well as civil law); *muftis* (advisors to the *qāzis* and prosecuting attorneys, who select the *fatwa*—or religious precedent—to fit the crime); *muhtasibs* (mild inquisitors whose duty it is to check the religious zeal of all within their jurisdiction, and punish

religious offenders with the whip if necessary) ; *imams* (highest three grades of religious leaders) ; *muezzins* (religious leaders of the fourth grade) ; and *mullahs* (religious leaders of the fifth grade).

Unless provoked unduly by a policy of too rapid westernization, the central government can depend on the support of the clergy. Amanullah, king from 1919 to 19.9, attempted to introduce reforms without the active support of the army and against the active opposition of the clergy ; he was driven from the country by revolt. The lesson is not lost on the present ruling family.

Because of the governmental subsidies to the religious leaders, no *waqfs* (endowed religious foundations for support of the clergy and religious activities) exist in Afghanistan. At the same time he salaried the clergy, 'Abdur-Rahmān transferred all such funds and lands and to the central government treasury. (Wilber, 1952, 44.)

Although the clerical leadership is not rigidly organized, a loose council of learned religious men (*jamyyāt-i-'ulemā*) exists. This *'ulemā* includes the most respected and most powerful leaders and it controls appointments to the five grades of mosques and passes on the religious acceptability of civil legislation. Only the eldest of this *'ulema* are called *hazrāt*, a term of respect which cannot be adequately translated, but connotes "honoured one" or "excellency." Noted scholars with less longevity may prefix their name with the term *maulavī*. (Wilber, 1952, 43.)

The top three grades of religious leaders are called *imāms*, and they serve the large mosques in the cities, The *imām juma* is the leader of the various Friday mosques, and he delivers the *khutbā* or Friday sermon. Fourth grade religious leaders, called *meuzzins* serve the mosques in the towns. Approximately 100,000 (Wilber, 1952, 44). *mullahs* serve the mosques and the villages. Possibly 15,000 (Wilber, (1952, 43) mosques of varying types exist in Afghanistan.

Having sketchily discussed the structure of the Hanifi hierarchy in Afghanistan and its relationship to the central government, let us proceed to the Afghan villages where I undertook field work in 1950–1951. First we shall examine the role of the religious leaders in a Tajik village in the Panjshir Valley of the Hindu Kush mountains north of Kabul, where live a sizeable number of mountaineer farmers speaking an archaic Persian dialect. The Tajiks constitute the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan : 2·2 million Tajiks to 6 5 million Pathans. Although previously Shi'i Muslims, many Tajiks have become Sunni, for practical political or economic reasons. Others, under the Shī'i practice of *taqiya* claim to be Sunnis while remaining Shī'a. *Taqiya* permit a Shī'i Muslim to deny his faith in order to

save his life, or business, although the latter is not specifically mentioned in Shī'i text. But after all, a man's business is intimately related to his life in one or more ways. Many Tajiks are still openly Shī'i Muslims, even though they are covertly and overtly discriminated against by the Sunni Pathans. Sunni murderers of Shī'i Afghans have reportedly gone unpunished.

The Tajiks of *Midanam* (fictional name of the village) are primarily Shī'i Muslims, but the central government had assigned a Sunni mullah to serve the mosque-school compound. Whether or not he served as the "eyes and ears of the king" was not discernible A small stream ran through the compound, making it convenient to perform the necessary ablutions before prayer. Two daily classes were held in the *maktab* (mosque school) ; one for boys, ond for girls Attendance was irregular and not compulsory The *mullah* taught the boys the Koran, which they intoned noisily in Arabic by rote, although even the *mullah* understood but little Arabic ; an old woman taught the girls the Koran with a few side hints about housewifery The *mullah*, a political appointee, wielded a sizeable amount of covert political power and without his tacit conscent our anthropological work would not have reached first base. The Afghan government representatives with us attended prayers at the mosque at least twice daily, and the *mullah* permitted our whole party, including my wife, to bathe inside the mosque compound, an act of near technical heresy He chased away the small boys who attempted to peek under the mud wall at my wife bathing, Bathsheba-like. The *mullah*, David-like, then had an unimpaired view. And he was a married man with children.

The *mullah* of Midanam, then, had three important functions : educational, religious, and political.

Later in 1950-51 we lived in the Sunni Pathan village of *Mifamam* (again a fictional name) in south-central Afghanistan, which had no government appointed and paid *mullahs* but rather two farmers who doubled as part time *mullahs*. Both had families and both were illiterate, but had committed large sections of the Koran to memory. The village had fewer than 100 souls, and the two *mullahs* competed for bodies to add to their congregations. They received no pay for their services, and conducted both daily prayers and the Friday sermon in simple rectangular mud huts They both claimed to have been touched by Allah ; both were respected by the villagers but considered a little crazy. They wanted more than anything to perform a miracle, i.e. to heal the sick, or make barren women give birth to sons, so that they would be considered *pirs* or saints and be buried in an honored tomb. To this end they sold

amulets (*tarwiz*) to their fellow villagers. If any amulets ever succeeded, they would be famous, and peasants all over the area would come to do homage and buy amulets. These *mullahs* desperately wanted to be different; they were illiterate men obsessed with the drive for power and attempted to achieve this power in the only way open to them. The Pathan villagers devoutly prayed the prescribed five times a day, even if at work in the fields or excavating for our expedition. They accepted as normal the *mullahs'* being touched by Allah. The local sub-governor, who lived in a town nearby, visited our excavations often and once gave a talk during the Friday sermon to explain to the villagers why we were there. The nearest government *mullah* also lived in the sub-provincial capital and was a large land owner. He owned several fields in the village of Mifamam, and was the butt of many local jokes.

The two respected, unpaid, part-time *mullahs* of *Mifamam* served an important religious function—more so than the government appointed *mullah* in Tajikistan or the land-owing *mullah* of the sub-provincial capital. The people respected both the Mifamam *mullahs* and looked on their competition as normal. Their amulets also made them function as doctors or magicians—just as many of our own general practitioners with their pills and antibiotics are obviously both doctors and magicians.

The village *mullah* is moved by the amorphous, emotional god who moves us all at one time or another. He is the epitome of the "folk society" preacher or evangelist who emotes in the culturally approved manner and thus induces what we call a group religious experience. He emphasized the emotional reality of the basic beliefs Nothing less—nothing more. The local, god touched *mullah* is accepted only so long as his—and I use the term unblushingly—*mana* is effective; his role is strictly religious, he reinforces the basic beliefs of Islam by leading group worship.

The government-appointed and paid *mullah* teaches formal doctrines and the Koran by rote, but the village *mullah* touches the hearts of the people. If he touches them often enough and his amulets and charms are effective, he may become a local saint at death. Favors will be asked of Allah in the name of the dead saint; thus, his power and status may continue to grow after death. An unscrupulous government-appointee cannot be expelled from a community; his role is secular as well as religious and he helps the central government maintain political control.

Several incidents from other areas of Afghanistan are worth recording for purposes of this paper. At another Pathan village,

near the town of Panjwai, we met a government-appointed *mullah* who gave us considerable trouble while we excavated a prehistoric mound. He exhorted the villagers not to work for an infidel (me) because I was digging up and defiling Muslim dead. He pointed to several prehistoric burials we had uncovered as proof. Overnight our three carefully exposed skeletons were stolen, under the eyes of a guard, and unceremoniously reburied in the flood plain near the village. We endured this indignity with the stoic, inscrutable dignity of the Occident. The *mullah*, however, persisted in his persecution. He claimed that *all* bones we uncovered were man. I showed him cow mandibles and teeth, and he consistently repeated, "*Ādam ast* (This is man)" He threatened to force the workmen off the site, if we did not desist from our flagrant disregard of the Muslim dead. In desperation I drew a line around a trench we were digging and announced that whoever stepped over the line would be forcibly removed from the site. The *mullah* immediately squatted over the edge of the trench and began to toss small stones and clods of dirt at the workmen. I threw him bodily off the site. The workmen and spectators laughed. The *mullah* left, shouting curses on the heads of all born and unborn Duprees, and announced that the sub governor Panjwai would have me arrested He left to visit the governor. He returned later during the day, and the smooth about face he exhibited should be studied by our State Department spokesmen. The sub-governor told me later he had ordered the *mullah* in no uncertain terms to leave us alone for we were doing good work for Afghanistan. This is a far cry from the first half of the 19th century when an Afghan *mullah* could start a *jihād* at the drop of an English footstep on the frontier.

In central Afghanistan we lived a short time near a nomadic Pathan group which specialized in raising Afghan hounds. No *mullah* travelled with this band. A leader said : "We need only our guns and Allah." This was the one group which refused to let us visit their tents, even though several of the men worked for us as labourers at a cave site.

In other tribal areas, I watched *mullah* leading young men in prayer. These young men laughed and made fun of the *mullah* behind their backs, making obscene gestures which no good Muslim could possibly call sacred.

In the city of Kandahar, we met several Muslim clerics who served as the personal religious counselors for wealthy families ; these personal retainers are called *murshid* or *rahnuma*. Retaining family

priests was and is common by wealthy landed families in Western Europe.

Islam, like Christianity, nurses few basic beliefs, and these continually float in a never-ending morass of theological justifications, elaborations, and mechinations. Islam itself means "submission"—submission to the will of God. This key tenet is embodied in the oft-heard expression, *Inshallah!* (If God wills!) The farmers and herders of Afghanistan care as little for teleological niceties as does the hypothetical—yet real and frightening—man in the American street. To become a Muslim, one simply believes and states "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of God." To become a Christian, one simply believes and states a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Any elaborations on either of these themes are strictly sectarian, including the Unitarian rejection of Christ's divinity, but acceptance of the doctrines of Christian theology.

A final question: How important are the basic beliefs of Islam (i.e., *Inshallah* and human egalitarianism in the presence of Allah) in the everyday lives of the Afghans? I think they are very important, but sectarian differences have lost significance because the very generality of the concepts has encouraged their flexibility. Fundamentally, Islam is a literate religion with a sophisticated liturgical literature, although most of its followers are illiterate. Recently, educators and social scientists have described American culture in almost the same phraseology.

In general terms, then, can we say that the more literate a society becomes, the more illiterate and flexible its beliefs? If so, it is obvious that religions lose importance in the total value systems of such cultures. In the Afghan examples, the role of the government-appointed *mullah* is more secular than religious.

Extending these observations to the field of theory, can we any longer believe in the relative value of organized religion to cultural servival in literate societies? There, literate religions should not be considered sacred cows which cannot be butchered, or the analysis of non literate religious institutions will remain the opiate of the anthropologists.

The function of religion in literate societies should be analyzed at the day to day, not the theological, level, and I suspect that we will find that illiterates in literate cultures, be they Western or Eastern, will *least miss* their religious rituals and organized beliefs when confronted by a technologically superior culture in an acculturation situation.

Notes

1. For purposes of this paper, religion is considered to have the following attributes: (1) belief in spiritual beings, (2) a codified system of beliefs, (3) a way of life, often modeled after a real or mythical founder

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